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Genocide Of Sikhs Throughout India

Worst Carnage And Pillage Of This Century

Government Officials Must Own Entire Blame

It was a macabre dance of death in major cities of India, especially in Delhi. The devils, all of a particular community, indulged in genocide of Sikhs on an unprecedented scale, piling into insignificance the wholesale massacre and destruction of property during 1947 partition pangs.

Sikhs were roasted alive, clubbed to death, hacked to pieces or maimed beyond recognition. Even women and children were not spared. Hundreds of young Sikh men, women and children are missing.

The toll is said to total more than 3,000 dead and over 10,000 grievously wounded, more than half of them in the Indian capital alone. Tens of thousands of houses and shops belonging to Sikhs were first looted and then set on fire. Their cars, scooters and trucks became special targets of Hindu fury. Dozen of gurdwaras have been razed to the ground.

Worst of all, the police, instead of providing protection to the beleaguered Sikhs, stood by as amused spectators. At numerous places, they instigated the mobs and later, shared the loot.

In Delhi, all Sikh officers of the police were disarmed and asked, along with other Sikh ranks, to stay indoors and not to stir out.

The army, when called in, did not provide the needed or adequate protection. Its alibi was that it had not received precise orders from its own officers. They refused to obey order of the police officers. The police officers, in turn, refused to obey the special magistrates appointed to restore law and order and bring about normalcy.

It was a complete break down of law and order machinery.

Why all this ire against the Sikhs as a community?

When Nathuram Godse had gunned down Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948, the Hindus did not go on the rampage.

Because Godse was Hindu, one of their own fraternity.

The assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi is a despicable and contemptible act. But it was the handiwork of two men. How could the entire community be blamed for it? Why must it be held to ransom? Why must innocent men, women and children be done to death?

The widows and orphaned children shall always remain an indelible blot on Hindu forehead.

Many of the majority community exulted with glee over the number of the persons they had killed and shops or houses they had ransacked.

For this mass-scale carnage, the governments at the Centre and in the States must take full responsibility. There was an appalling absence of even the most elementary anticipating events, initiative and co-ordination at all levels.

The Indian capital, in particular, was turned over to mobsters to kill, pillage and commit.

(Continued on page 6)

Hundreds of Gurdwaras Burnt or Damaged by Fanatic Mobs

Is it a hint that Sikhs should opt out of India ?

Hundreds of gurdwaras throughout India have either been burnt down or badly damaged by angry Hindu mobs following Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination by two of her Sikh security guards. Nearly 150 gurdwaras in various localities of the Indian capital alone have been reduced to rubble.

One could understand the people's wrath against the murderers. But what had these houses of God done to invite such fury?

All admit that the Creator is common to all, and various religions are just different paths to reach Him and become attuned with Him.

Hindus owe great debt to Sikhism. It was to protect Hindus and Hinduism from extinction that Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Ninth Master, gave his life in Delhi's Chandni Chowk.

It was Sikh armies which protected Hindus in Punjab from the Mughal *zulum* and foreign invaders.

But it is an irony of fate that the Hindu hoodlums set

fire to gurdwara Sisganj in the Indian capital, which has been built at the site where Guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded in his fight for Hindus' right to wear the 'Janeu' (sacred thread) and 'tilak' (mark on the forehead). Thanks to God's grace, the fire was soon put out before it could grievously damage the holiest Sikh shrine in the Indian capital.

Attempt was also made on Gurdwara Rakabganj, another holy shrine raised at the place where Guru Tegh Bahadur's headless body was cremated.

Does not this amount to sheer ingratitude on part of these purblind Hindus, as they tried to annihilate the memorials in honour of their own saviour?

This also shows how anger can sometimes veer people away from the path of sanity and loyalty.

Or should one conclude that these chauvanistic Hindus want Sikhs to opt out of India. The Sikhs cannot be finished like this. They must know it well.

Several lakh Sikhs are now without any home or any belonging. They are taking shelter in nearby gurdwaras or have been removed to refugee camps. But the government efforts in this direction have been tardy and inadequate. Private welfare organisations are doing better. The Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee must also rise to the occasion and rush food, clothings, and quilts to them.

Till now abodes have been found for them, the living conditions in camps must be improved, with better sanitation, improved water supply and regular cooked food. This is not asking for too much.

I know of no foe,
My foe is none;
I am at peace with all.

—Guru Nanak

The eternal message of love, fraternity and brotherhood of mankind, so endearingly propagated by Guru Nanak Dev ji, is particularly significant now when India is confronted with a communal crisis.

Let us, on this auspicious occasion, pledge ourselves to the realisation of his ideals and resolve to tread the path of amity and goodwill shown by him.



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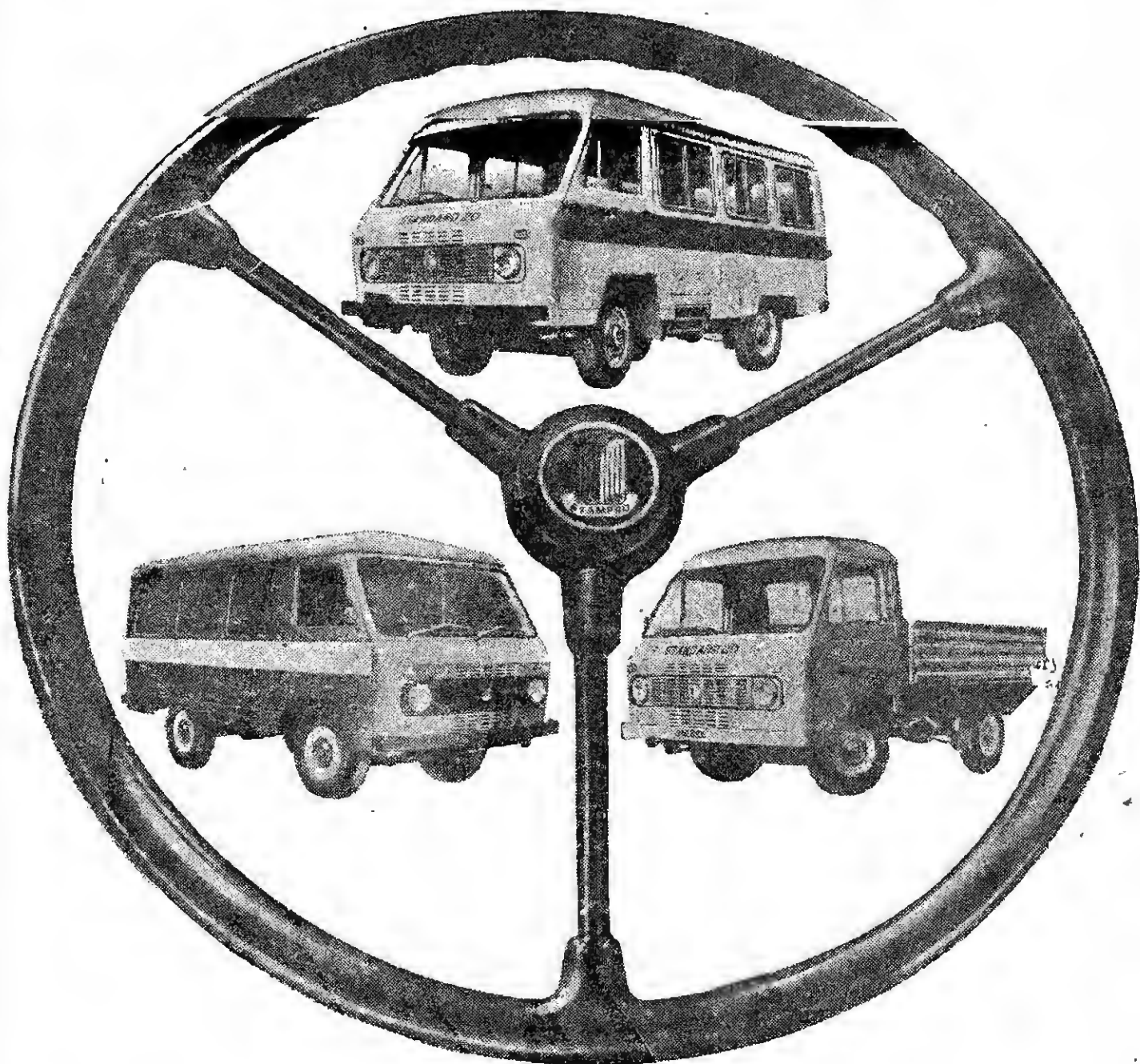
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ਅਪੀਲ

ਗੁਰੂ ਰੂਪ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ! ਪਿਛਲੇ ਦਿਨੀਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਗੁਰਧਾਮਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਫ਼ੌਜੀ ਹਮਲੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਜੋ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਸਿੰਘ, ਸਿੰਘਣੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੀੜਤ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਖਵਾਲੀ, ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਵਰਸ਼ ਕਰਨਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਜ਼ੁੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਪਰਵਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਪਾਲਣ-ਪੋਸਣ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦਿਵਾਉਣਾ ਸਾਡਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਫ਼ਰਜ਼ ਹੈ।

ਸੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਮੂਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ, ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਦਾਨੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਪੀਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸ਼ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਇਸ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਲਈ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ "ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਫ਼ੰਡ" ਵਿਚ ਦਿਲ ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਪਾਉਣ।

ਸਾਡੇ ਨੋਟਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਕੁਝ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ਹੀਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਰਵਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਹਿੱਤ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਗਤ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਉਗਰਾਹੀ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸਾਡੀ ਅਪੀਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਇਕੱਤਰ ਹੋਈ ਮਾਇਆ ਤੁਰੰਤ ਹੀ "ਸ਼ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ" ਦੇ 'ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਫ਼ੰਡ' ਵਿਚ ਚੈੱਕਾਂ ਤੇ ਡਰਾਫ਼ਟਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਭੇਜ ਦੇਣ।

ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਸਦੇ ਸਰਦੇ-ਪੁਜਦੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੀ ਇਸ "ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਫ਼ੰਡ" ਵਿਚ ਵੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਯੋਗ-ਦਾਨ ਪਾਉਣ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਵੱਡੀ ਜ਼ੁੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਨਿਭਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ।



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ਹੋਂਡ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ,
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A THOUGHT FROM GURBANI

What evil times have come !
Men have faces like the dogs that eat carrion
and bark falsehood.
They have forsaken righteousness altogether.

—Guru Nanak

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FOLLOW TEACHINGS

As we celebrate 515th birthday of Guru Nanak, founder of our faith, there is need to hark back to the teachings he gave us. Prominent among them were three golden rules—"Nam Japo", "Kirt Karo", "Wand Chakko" (meditate on God's name, work for your livelihood and share your food and wealth with others). Not that these principles were for others to follow. The guru himself set an example.

From his very childhood, Guru Nanak became attuned with the Creator. His sermon to the Pundit who wanted the child to wear the sacred thread, his distribution of food to a group of sadhus as part of "Sacha Sauda" (True deal), and his repetition of word "tera" (thou) when he reached the number 13 while weighing corn were proofs enough of this. Later, the Guru undertook tours of India and abroad and spread the message of fatherhood of God and brotherhood of Man.

Guru Nanak tilled his land with his own hands and did not live on offerings from his numerous followers. This was in consonance with the agesold axiom that one must live by the sweat of one's brow.

The Guru also shared all he had with others. It was he who initiated the concept of "Langar" (community kitchen) in which the rich and the poor, high and low, sat in "pangat" (row) to partake food.

Are we following the Guru's edicts? Today there will be usual processions, diwans and speeches, but missing shall be the genuine adherence to the path carved out for us by the Guru. Recitation of gurbani and kirtans have become just rituals; these do not flow from the inner recesses of our hearts. Most of the Sikhs come in flashy dresses, armed with picnic baskets, as if they are on a pleasure trip. Manual labour, even for our household chores, most of us shirk; the affluent take pride in a team of servants. Though most of us are fairly well off, yet very few donate "daswandh"—one-tenth of income—to noble causes.

The spirit of self-sacrifice is there, fortunately, in ample measure among the Sikh masses. The cleaning of shoes and used utensils is a much-sought after service.

It is the leaders who have been found wanting. They are more after pelf and power and believe in self-aggrandisement. They have converted the holy shrines into dens of personal feuds. Not a few have been guilty of sequestering gurdwara funds for their personal ends and pleasures. They need to be shown the exit door. In this way, our society shall become purer and a better atmosphere shall be created to extricate the community out of the present marshes.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Great Tragedy

The nation lies prostrate in a pall of gloom. The assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi was both sudden and shocking, though she had received many threats to her life ever since she ordered the army's storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar. The security around her and others on "hit list" was tightened, but, now it transpires, the arrangements were not adequate, certainly not foolproof. The fact that she was gunned down by two of her own trusted security men, who happened to be Sikhs, proves the extent to which Sikhs feel grievously wounded over the desecration of their holiest shrine. If she had followed in the footsteps of Giani Zail Singh and expressed remorse or a public apology for demolition of the Akal Takht, the ruffled feelings of the Sikhs might have been assuaged a bit. But it was not to be.

The widespread terror let loose by the army in Punjab against Sikhs, especially in the rural areas, had piled up great resentment against Mrs. Gandhi. And these two men, who were supposed to protect her from dangers from all quarters, themselves chose to sniff life out of this frail but courageous woman. If Mrs. Gandhi cannot be blamed

for army action in Punjab, the murder is not the right answer, as to wrongs cannot make one right.

Apparently, the murder had been planned with great meticulousness by the two men. They were also imbued, though wrongly, with a sense of "sacred mission". This is borne out by the fact that one of them shouted he had "become a martyr" while the other exclaimed that he had done his "job", and the authorities could do to him whatever they liked. And they made no attempt to run away like ordinary criminals or cowards. But this all is topsy-turvy. The cult of the bullet cannot be allowed to hold ground, much less spread.

In this hour of grave crisis, we all have to pull together, thereby contributing to the ideals hugged so much by the departed leader. Despite her shortcomings, Mrs. Gandhi worked hard to maintain the country's unity and integrity. Any attempt to corrode this base would be the biggest disservice to her monumental work for the people's welfare and the nation's prosperity. We have to transcend the narrow feelings of sectarianism, parochialism and hatred and remain steadfast in our resolve to pull the land unseated out of these dark days.

New Prime Minister

The swearing in of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi as new Prime Minister, can, in some way, prove the allegation of Mrs. Gandhi endeavouring for "perpetuation of a dynastic rule". But the real malady lies in the fact that Mrs. Gandhi did not allow anyone to grow tall enough to challenge her authority and status, not to speak of ensuring smooth succession by someone outside her family. The choice of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is indication of the ruling party's political bankruptcy, or say, desire to keep its ranks serried and prevent dismemberment. If the mantle had fallen on some other shoulders it could well ignite the hidden fires of jealousy and the resultant in-fighting would have been inevitable. Some have questioned as undemocratic Congress (I) parliamentary board's nomination of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi as leader of its Parliamentary Party. This job should have been left, they contend, to Congress (I) members of Parliament, but there was grave danger of claims and counter-claims weakening the party's structure, though it was built into a monolith by Mrs. Gandhi. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's election as leader has since been unanimously made by the party in Parliament. This reduces the controversy about his earlier

appointment to mere hair-splitting.

On Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's young shoulders lies a great responsibility, and in its discharge he would need the goodwill, unstinted support and affection of everyone in this land. How will he acquit himself remains to be seen. He came into politics only four years ago and has never had administrative experience. After becoming Congress (I) general secretary, he did emerge as the second most powerful man in the party. But there have been reports of his getting surrounded by "computer boys" who are raw in age and experience but strut about as big-wigs and call the tune. He shall have to turn to more seasoned politicians for advice. His recent comments on events in Punjab and Andhra Pradesh betrayed rigidity of posture and absence of maturity and statesmanship. To carry all the communities with him, he shall have to be less carping in his criticism of those who differ from him and more responsive to the people's genuine grievances. We wish him well and pray and hope that he shall measure himself upto the people's expectations. Lok Sabha elections are due in the next two months and that shall be the biggest test of his leadership.

Suppression And Oppression Instead Of "Healing Touch"

Why refusal to publish lists of Sikhs killed or arrested ?

Central government, through the army, continues its unabated campaign of repression and suppression against the Sikhs in Punjab. And Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Kirpal Singh has asked the members of his community to sink their differences, if any, and unite to face the onslaught on them and achieve their goals.

Despite a lot of talk about providing a healing touch and assuage the frayed feelings of the Sikhs, the government, through dubious means, is trying to rub salt into Sikh wounds. It is holding a sword of oppression over the heads of the community. It was to express the com-

munity's sorrow and grief over this reign of terror as well as mass killings of innocent Sikhs, first in army action and now in fake police encounters, that the Sikhs were asked not to celebrate the Diwali which, otherwise, is a festival of lights and joy, and the community responded to this appeal.

(Continued from page 1)
arson at will. The Trilokpuri massacre in East Delhi is one of the worst examples of what has been a hideous chapter of infamy in Indian history.

The new Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, was, indeed, gravely concerned over this "madness" which he rightly said, would destroy us and all that India stood for. He addressed the nation twice in two days over radio and television networks. He also enlisted the support of all opposition parties to issue a joint appeal for sanity and end to all vandalism and rioting. The statement stressed that Sikhs had made numerous sacrifices for India and were now "an integral part of Indian nation".

But the mobs, encouraged by workers of various political parties, ignored these sane appeals.

All this need not have happened and, once started, could have been controlled but for the masterly inactivity, perhaps connivance, on the part of some who had it in their power to intervene.

Curfew was not imposed at the very outset. Even after it was clamped, it was not enforced in the right earnest. Mobs went about unchecked on their missions of death and destruction. The shoot-at-sight order was a farce.

Fortunately, there has been no reaction in Punjab. This is due to the wisdom of both Hindus and Sikhs there whose leaders have gone out of the way to ensure communal peace and amity. Otherwise, there could be gravest repercussions.

But we have now to find out whether these purblind Hindus want the Sikhs to remain as part and parcel of India.

Those, who guided the mobs, are the biggest hypocrites. On one hand, they claim that Sikhs are "just keshadhari Hindus". On the other, they want to decimate them once and for all.

to be insect-infested. Medical facilities are lacking and incidence of malaria is high.

Akali leaders who were still outside, as well as Sikh intellectuals, backed by Punjabi Hindus of good-will, have been repeatedly urging the government to publish the names of all those persons who have been arrested so that their relatives know about their whereabouts and can sit back with peace of mind that they have not been done to death so far.

Why government has not acceded to this sane request, which has a humanitarian element about it passes one's conception.

There can be some cause for refusing to publish the list of those Sikhs who were massacred either in Golden Temple at Amritsar and inside other gurdwaras in Punjab or in fake police encounters. But there is no earthly reason why the list of people, who are alive but in jails, cannot be made available. If the aim is to keep people in the dark, then it is self-defeating. Because suppression of news leads to rumours and this, in turn, arouses enmity and hatred

against the rulers.

It is still not late and we sincerely hope that government would see the wisdom of acceding to this request.

Tiny Tots "Most Dangerous Terrorists"

Government callousness lies exposed by its treatment of Sikh children. Aged between 2 and 16 years of age, they are rotting in Punjab jails. Some of them have been arraigned on charges of violating the curfew imposed in Punjab during June this year while others have been dubbed as "most dangerous extremists".

How can a child of two years of age be held responsible for these "crimes", government's ingenuity cannot sink further.

Recently the supreme court had ordered the release of 23 women and children from Ludhiana jail as they were "obviously pilgrims" who were caught in the cross-fire. But there are many more innocent women and children in other jails, especially in Amritsar and Nabha. The supreme court should look into their cases and order their release also. It is the last refuge against government excesses.

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The "Hindustan" of Guru Nanak

By : Dr. Trilochan Singh

You have shielded Khurasan,
But struck terror in Hindustan.
Yet You take no blame on Yourself, Lord.
You have sent Yama in the guise of Babur
Terrible has been the cries of innocent victims.
You are the One Spirit in all, O Creator.
You must feel for all men and all nations.
If a strong power attacks another strong power,
No one would grieve, none would complain.
But when fierce tigers prey on hapless cattle
You, mighty Herdsman, must answer for it.

Guru Nanak : Rag Asa, A.G., 360

Sikh Congress(I) pseudo-intellectuals and Jathedars have used this hymn of Guru Nanak, quoted above, as weapon against all the Sikh demands, particularly, their demand for autonomous State within the Indian union. Their interpretation is spun around the erroneous conclusion drawn from it that Guru Nanak was really never interested in Punjab, but only in Hindustan the whole country. Thereby they conclude that the Sikh demands for Punjabi language and other political demands related to Punjab which are being agitated for the last thirty-seven years to strengthen the political, social and cultural background of the Sikhs and the State, would be harmful to the Sikhs, as the fulfilment of these aspirations would weaken the hold of 80 percent Hindus of India on 2 percent Sikhs who are militants and terrorists. They dare not say that strengthening the position of the Sikhs in Punjab would weaken the Authoritarian rule of Indira Gandhi's Congress, whose political hirelings, these intellectuals and jathedars claim to be. The regional stooges of Mrs Indira Gandhi have been tutored to preach that strengthening the Sikhs in Punjab, Kashmiris in Kashmir, and Assamese in Assam would destroy her fortress of powerbase, that is the Hindi Speaking States, backed by Gujrat, where her only rivals are superannuated renegades from Congress, Morarji Desai and Charan Singh, both as haughty and conceited about their self-importance as she herself is. This according to her logic and political aims would lead to the disintegration of the country. The unity of the country she believes depends on keeping Punjab, Kashmir, Assam and Eastern states enslaved by terrorism and military rule, and toppling other governments. Each Mughal or Afghan or British ruler in Delhi had his own style of ruling. There are only two rulers whose mighty efforts to bring unity through armed forces and communal unity have led to all round revolt and disintegration : Indira Gandhi and Aurangzeb. The only difference is that Aurangzeb tried to bring unity by enforcing Islamic domination and destroying Hindu Temples, while Indira Gandhi is trying to bring about authoritarian unity by enforcing Hindu domination and destroying Sikh Temples. In this essay I am not concerned with Mrs Indira Gandhi's tricks and make believe manipulations but with deceptions and contrivances popularized by her Sikh stooges whom Ranjiv Gandhi calls real Sikhs, because they are devoutly dependent on the crumbs from his royal table.

Guru Nanak's Hindustan was the same as the Hindustan of other great modern savants of India like Tagore, Iqbal, Aurobindo Ghosh. It certainly never was the Bharat of today, driven to self-destruction by the most banal Hindu fundamentalism under the cloak of secularism.

II

Correct Interpretation of Guru Nanak's Hymn

It must be noted that in this hymn Guru Nanak mentions Hindustan along with Khurasan in the context of international politics of invasions and conquests in Asia and Middle East. As Guru Nanak had been to the Middle East a few years earlier, he was an eye witness to the political conflicts and cultural upheavals in these regions. The hymn is addressed to God invoking His compassion and mercy for a nation which was ruled by corrupt, greedy and selfish rulers, who were not even able to defend the country from invaders. For Guru Nanak, Afghan rulers who had settled here, were as much Indians as any other person living in Hindustan. He does not call them foreigners, malechhas, and outsiders as the Muslims and even Sikhs are addressed by the Hindu monks and fanatics of Bharat today. Guru Nanak blames God for not protecting

helpless people from the ravages of Babar's invasion but then he says, "What can we do except to abide by His Inscrutable Will."

Some years earlier, Guru Nanak had warned the rich and wealthy of Lahore that their craze for wealth, luxury by looting, plundering and exploiting the poor masses would lead them in the pit of self destruction. When Lahore was plundered for four days and women of noble birth were raped, humiliated and paraded in the streets with ropes round their necks, Guru Nanak wrote :

Now they are dragged with ropes round their neck :
Their necklaces are snapped and their pearls scattered :
Their beauty and wealth were once their greatest assets ;
Their beauty and wealth are now their greatest enemies ;
They have disgraced and molested them.

Guru Nanak, Asa, 417

Guru Nanak also suggests that the cause of defeat of Hindustani army was its defence unpreparedness, and inferior weapons and stupid strategy. This theory is supported by authorities on this period. Jadunatha Sarkar, and Wolsely Haig say that Afghans relied on one thousand war elephants, and horsemen and footsoldiers numbering about a lakh. They fought with bows, arrows, pikes, swords and some jat recruits even had bamboo rods, and nothing else. On the other hand Babar used artillery, firearms which were brought into India by him for the first time. Babar's muskets, rockets (bombs) worked havoc in Afghan army killing elephant drivers and wounding elephants ; Guru Nanak also says :

Ferocious battle raged,
Between Mughals and Pathans.
The sword flashed and clashed in the battlefield.
The Mughals fixed and fired their guns,
The Pathans fought with bows and arrows
Riding their huge elephants.

Guru Nanak, Asa 418

There is a rude awakening among all the Sikhs. They now know what place they have in Indira Gandhi's Hindustan, and how different is it from the Hindustan of Guru Nanak's dreams.

Besides their weapons they used astrologers, magicians, pirs and pundits to perform magical rites just as our ministers use Tantrics these days. Guru Nanak's vision of the world and humanity had no geographical limits and boundaries. But his Hindustan, included the present day Bharat, Pakistan, Bangla Desh and a good deal of Tibet which we have surrendered to China, and hope to recover through Nehru's *Panch-shil*, because it was lost by the unrealistic political cult of *Panch-shil*. The Hindustan of Guru Nanak was divided into many independent states, but culturally, socially it was one and indivisible. But Indira Gandhi has made Sikhs, Kashmiris, Assamese feel that they are aliens in her "Hindustan" and must accept the status of serfs if they wish to live here.

In Guru Nanak's Hindustan, the dearest and the most unforgettable place was his *Sandal Bar*, (Forest of Sandaliya Rishi) where he was born and where he spent his childhood, and boyhood.

Enchanting is the season of spring (*Chaitra*)
The bumble-bee makes the woodland beautiful.
If my Beloved comes to my home, my heart;
The whole Sandaliya forest, homeland of my childhood
Will bloom with the flowers of spring.

*

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The koil sings from mango groves in joy
Difficult it is to endure the sorrow of separation.
The honey-bee wanders from flowers to flowering plants ;

I still pine in sorrow of separation.

Guru Nanak : Tukhari

Guru Nanak's region of Sandaliya Rishi's forest (Sandal Bar) is no more on the Hindustan of Nehru-Indira era, though it was a very important part of Hindustan from Vedic period to 1947. Guru Nanak's birthplace, his Panja Sahib, and his Hindustan of flowers, forests, koels, bumblebees, and peacocks is no longer our motherland. It is an enemy country. But it still is the motherland of Guru Nanak and not our enemy country. Sikhs go there for pilgrimage every year a number of times.

The Hindus of Bharat are politically very wise if not cunning like Kautaliya (Indian Machiavelli). They drove the Buddhist out of the land of birth of Lord Buddha, to Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, China and Japan. We have not even thanked these countries for giving asylum to Buddhism nor felt ashamed of what our Hindu ancestors did to them. And now in Nehru-Indira era the Sikhs are being chased with Bren guns and Sten guns their holy books have been burnt and they are being chased to foreign countries. The Hindu Swamis, Arya Samajist, and political fanatics are planning to destroy them politically and culturally, and in grateful response to the barbaric persecution Indira Gandhi's armies have carried out, they have assured her of all the Hindu votes, either to retain her in power or to defeat her. What they will do is still a Brahminical and mysterious secret of the Hindu Sangathans and Hindu Parishads, and Virat Hindu Samelans. The Sikhs for them are modern substitutes for the ancient Dasyus, Asuras, and Malechhas. They are told to go anywhere except Pakistan.

In our own century there have been four great Indians whose vision of Hindustan was the same as that of Guru Nanak; whose name they often mention when they spoke of Indian culture at its highest level :

They were : Vivekananda, Tagore, Iqbal, and Aurobindo Ghosh. They looked forward to a Hindustan in which all religious cultures, all linguistic cultures lived in the unity of diversity in a Federal Union for equality and freedom for all.

Iqbal's Hindustan

The greatest Urdu and Persian poet of our century, Sir Muhammed Iqbal (d 1938) who considered himself a Hindi or Hindustani (the two words used in his writings) wrote the most illuminating Songs on Hindustan, Sages of Hindustan and its culture. He was a

Hindustani even nine years after his death, but after 1947 with a stroke of pen of Nehru and others he was made a non-Hindustani and a national poet of our traditional enemy, Pakistan, (the new tradition of Hindu fundamentalism which started from 1947). Iqbal was always proud of saying that his ancestors were Kashmiri Brahmins and he referred to his Kashmiri Brahmin ancestry thus :

Look at me, for in Hind thou will not see again,

A man of Brahmin extraction vested in the mystic knowledge of Rumi and Tahiriz.

It is an irony of fate that the new rulers of Bharat (Nehru-Indira) who have virtually eliminated Iqbal's name from Bharat's cultural scene are also of Kashmiri Brahmin extraction. But to them the Kashmiri Muslim poet became as distasteful as Kashmiri Muslim politicians Sheikh Abdulla and Dr Farooq Abdulla. Had Iqbal seen what is going on in Kashmir today, he would have once more recited his poem about the agony of Kashmir which he witnessed during Dogra Raj :

The clutches of tyranny and ignorance have reduced us to misery,

Like a pair of scissors they have clipped our wings and feathers.

O Lord, may the armies of that tyrant wither

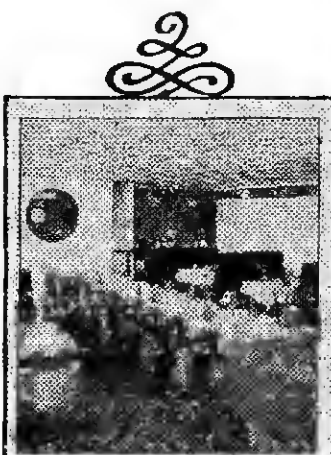
Who has suppressed the Spirit of Kashmir's freedom.

Iqbal like Tagore and Aurobindo envisaged a federal and multinational India in which Hindus and Sikhs, Muslims and Christians lived together enjoying autonomy and freedom to develop their culture. A few years before his death Iqbal wrote :

"I am opposed to nationalism as it is understood in Europe, not because, if it is allowed to develop in India, it will bring less material gain to Muslims. I am opposed to it because I see in it germs of atheistic materialism, which I look upon as the greatest danger to modern humanity. Patriotism is a perfectly natural virtue and has a place in moral life of man. Yet that which really matters is man's faith, his culture, his historical traditions. These are the things which in my eyes are worth living for and dying for and not the piece of earth with which the spirit of man happens to be temporarily associated."

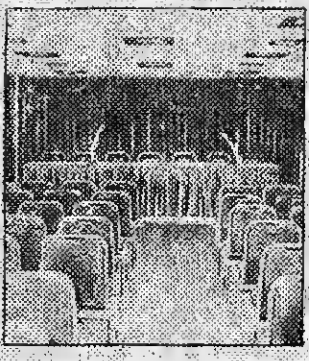
Added Iqbal "True statesmanship cannot ignore facts, however unpleasant they may be but to recognize facts as they are and to

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Guru Nanak's Hindustan was the same as the Hindustan of other great modern savants of India. It certainly never was the Bharat of today, driven to self-destruction by the most banal Hindu fundamentalism under the cloak of secularism.

exploits them to our greatest advantages. And it is the discovery of Indian unity in this direction that the fate of India as well as Asia depends. India is Asia in miniature. If an effective principle of co-operation is discovered in India, it will bring peace and mutual goodwill to this ancient land which has suffered so long because of her situation in historical space than because of any inherent incapacity of her people."

"It is however painful to observe that our attempt to discover such a principle of internal harmony have so far failed. Perhaps we respect each other's intuitions and inwardly aim at dominating each other. Perhaps in the higher interest of material co-operation we cannot afford to part with the monopolies which circumstances have placed in our hands and conceal our egoism under the cloak of nationalism. Perhaps we are unwilling to recognize that each group has the right to free development according to its cultural traditions."

Quoting Renan in another place Iqbal avers: "Man" says Renan, "is enslaved neither by his race nor by his religion, nor by the course of rivers nor by the direction of mountain ranges. A great aggregate of men, sane minds and warm of heart, create a moral consciousness which is called a nation. Such a formation is quite possible, though it involves the long arduous process of practically remaking men and furnishing them with fresh emotional equipment. It might have been a fact in India if the teachings of Nanak, Kabir and Divine Faith of Akbar had seized the imagination of the country."

But Indira Gandhi can say, "We recite Iqbal's poem *sare jahan se achha Hindustan hamara*" on Doordarshan (T.V.) so often that we have made people forget Bankim Chander's '*Bande Matram*' ever since Bengal has had a Marxist Leftist government. She is right. This song is sung beautifully by a large group of children but care is always taken by Doordarshan organizing geniuses that Iqbal's name is never mentioned. Who cares for the copyright of the poet on this song which may expire in 1988. Iqbal became a Pakistani after 1947 nine years after his death. Will not the Hindus of Bharat feel ashamed of listening to the song of a Pakistani every now and then. Would not the Brahminical purity of Doordarshan be polluted by the very mention of Iqbal's name in News bulletins.

Rabindranath Tagore's Hindustan

Rabindranath Tagore had great respect for Mahatma Gandhi, but when Gandhi made some irrational statements harmful to Indian thought and culture Tagore made a hard hitting criticism. He was against the *charkha* cult and the *gobar* cult of Gandhiji. In 1934 when there was an earthquake in Bihar, Gandhi instead of sympathising with the victims blamed their *karma* like typical orthodox Hindus for their suffering which the Mahatma considered well deserved. M. Gandhi said, "God has punished them justly for believing in untouchability."

Tagore in a hard hitting criticism of Gandhi wrote: "It has caused me painful surprise to find Mahatma Gandhi accusing them who blindly follow their customs of having brought down God's vengeance upon certain parts of Bihar, evidently, especially selected for His desolation and displeasure. What is truly tragic about it is the fact that the kind of argument that Mahatmajiji uses by exploiting an event of cosmic disturbances, far better suits the psychology of his opponents than his own and it would not have surprised me at all if they had taken the opportunity of holding him and his followers responsible for visitation of Divine Anger". Had Tagore been alive in 1947 he would have condemned Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Patel for accepting the partition of the country, and making merry while Bengal and Punjab were bleeding.

Tagore has given expression to his vision of "Hindustan" in his book "Nationalism" in which he says: "In spite of our great difficulty, however, India has done something; she tried to make an adjustment of races to acknowledge the real differences between them, when these exist and yet seek for some basis of unity. This basis has come through Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya and others preaching one God to all races of India". "I have no hesitation in saying that those who are gifted with the moral power of love and vision of spiritual unity, who have the least feeling of enmity against aliens, and the sympathetic insight to place themselves in the position of others, will be fittest to take their permanent place in the age that is lying before us, and those who are constantly

developing their instinct of fight and intolerance of aliens will be alienated. For this is the problem before us, and we have to prove our humanity by solving it through the help of our nature."

Adds Tagore: "We must never forget in present day that those who have got their political freedom are not necessarily free, they are merely powerful. The passions which are unbridled in them are creating huge organizations of slavery in the disguise of freedom. These have made the gain of money their highest aim and are unconsciously selling their life and soul to rich persons or to combinations that represent money. Those who are enamoured of their political power or gloat over their extension of dominion over foreign races gradually surrender their own freedom and humanity to the organizations necessary for holding other people in slavery. In the so called free countries, the majority of the people are not free; they are driven by majority to a goal which is not even known to them. This becomes possible only because people do not acknowledge moral or spiritual freedom as their object."

(Nationalism : p. 62—121)

These words of Tagore are as true today as they were decades ago. I learnt Bengali only to study Tagore in the original. When during Tagore Centenary, the then Vice Chancellor of Shantiniketan Mr Das invited me to the Literature and Philosophy Conferences for a week each, I was surprised when I was asked to be the first speaker, when there were eminent writers and scholars like K.M. Munshi and Uma Shanker Joshi there. Explained the Vice-Chancellor: "You represent Punjab and we do not wish to forget that Tagore loved Punjab more than every other State and that is why he placed Punjab as the first State among those counted in National anthem. Ms Kanika Devi who had been trained to sing Rabindra Sangit by the Poet himself chose as the opening song Tagore's Bengali translation of Guru Nanak's Arati: *gagan mai thal ravi chana dipak banai* which in Bengali sounded very much like the original in Punjabi.

The Vice-Chancellor also told me that Tagore had decided not to build any religious temple in Shantiniketan, but he agreed to build the Gurdwara on the model of Golden Temple but Rev C.F. Andrews rushed to Shantiniketan to desist him from this as it might lead to the demand for mosque and church also. The Hindustan of Tagore's dreams today is torn apart into fighting states and communities organised by the rulers and the fence is eating the vast garden of our country. Haryana is pitted in an organized way against Punjab, Assamese against Bengalis, Kashmir Muslims against Jammu Hindus who have found a new Hindu avatar: Prince Karan Singh. All this is being done in the name of democracy, secularism and unity of the country just by two people: Mrs Indira Gandhi and her son. Had Tagore visited his dearly loved Punjab today he would have showered a curse on the present day rulers as Iqbal did on Kashmir, in poignant words which once came out Tagore's anguished heart in a similar situation:

Give me power, O Awful Judge,
Sitting on the throne of Eternity,
That I may hurl imprecations
Upon the Cannibals whose gruesome
Hunger
Spares neither women nor children;
That my words of reproach may ever rock
Upon the heart throbs of a history,
Humiliated by itself,
Till this age choked and chained
Find the bed of its final rest in its
Ashes.

Dark Clouds Over Guru Nanak's Hindustan

If Guru Nanak came to his birth place, Nankana Sahib this year on 8th November, 1984 he would be glad to see Muslims and Sikhs in his birth place in such large numbers, but he would be pained to note that all the Sikhs assembled in his birth place are now considered foreigners in that country, which was his dear old *Sandal Bar* (Forest of Sandaliya Rishi). If he walked towards his dear disciple Guru Angad's place,

Khadur, in Bharat he would not be allowed to cross the border. He would be considered either a Pathan or a Baluch Sikh in his classical dress. If he said that he was Nanak, Founder of Sikhism, and comes from his birth place Nankana Sahib, he would be told: "You are domiciled Pakistani, and if you do not have a Pakistani passport, you are a Stateless citizen". If his case is referred to Delhi he would be told: "We have to accommodate many thousand Stateless Tamilians from Ceylon, so we cannot accommodate a Sikh even if he is Guru Nanak. He would be advised to seek asylum in some Western country where Sikhs are seeking asylum at the speed of about 500 a month. The Sikhs in Hindustan of Indira Gandhi are fighting a battle against the bitterest persecution in their history.

Indira Gandhi does not know that it is not the Sikhs who preserve their rich cultural and spiritual heritage but it is the heritage that preserves them. The hostile and cruel Hindu world which she has built around them to terrorise and humiliate them will ultimately be defeated and humbled. Persecution, pogroms, economic strangulation have always united them and strengthened them.

There is a stunning and electrifying awakening among the Sikhs all over the world. They know now, what place they have in Indira Gandhi's Hindustan, and how different it is from the Hindustan of Guru Nanak's great expectations, and the Hindustan of Iqbal's and Tagore's dreams and visions of the future. Tagore, Iqbal, Vivekananda, and Anurobindo visualised a Hindustan in which Sikhs, Muslims, Christians and regional cultures would enjoy equality and full freedom to develop and flower in a Federal and multinational and multicultural federal India. What has happened is that we daily read about dozens of young *Amritdharis* (baptized Sikhs) killed by Gold-medalist killers like S.S.P. Bua Singh of Amritsar who is considered to be a giant among killers of innocent Sikhs, and whose statistics are released by the government in cold and chilling figures and

numbers. Every number in this statistics was only recently a living human being, a young ambitious devout Sikh, whose only fault was to be born a true and devoted Sikh. He had family, parents, talent, ability, and he was very much like other human beings who have taken upon them the tyrannical task of killing *Amritdharis* Sikhs indiscriminately and then audaciously refusing to give their names, addresses and identity. Such young Sikhs who appear to be devout *Amritdharis*, and talk of freedom in Sikh traditions have no human rights and are being eliminated from Indira Gandhi's conception of Hindustan and Indian nation. And what can we say about such a Hindustan and such a nation:

"My friends and my road followers, pity the nation that is full of beliefs and empty of religion.

"Pity the nation that acclaims the bully as hero, and that deems the glittering conqueror beautiful.

"Pity a nation that dispises passion in its dreams, yet submits in its awakening.

"Pity the nation that raises not its voice when it walks in a funeral, boasts not except among the ruins, and will revel not when its neck is laid between the sword and the blocks.

"Pity the nation whose statesman is a fox, whose philosopher is a juggler and whose art is the art of patching and mimicking.

"Pity the nation that welcomes its new ruler with trumpets and farewells him with hootings only to welcome another with trumpeting again.

"Pity the nation whose sages are dumb with years and whose strongmen are yet in the cradle.

Kahlil Gibra

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The best product of the Bhakti movement was Guru Nanak, who sought to harmonize Hinduism and Islam by ignoring their externals and stressing the worship of God as the one essential. Love and faith, he taught, are the way to God-realization. He fervently believed in One Absolute God. In other words, Guru Nanak was uncompromisingly monotheistic. Call Him the First Cause or the Ultimate Reality, God is the One Absolute, the Transcendent, the Ineffable, the Unborn, Eternal, Self-Existent. He is the Infinite Being, who can never be defined in human words. He is One, Alone, Without a Second, Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. He is considered to be One within and without. "God was in the beginning the Truth, through ages, He has been the Truth, even now He is the immanent Truth, for ever He shall be the Truth," said Guru Nanak.

"*Eko Simro, Nanak, jo sab men raha samae.*" (Think of ponder over One, O Nanak, who is present in every thing.)

Guru Nanak stood for all that is best in the Vedic and Semitic traditions. Learned scholars are of the view that the faith of the Aryans subordinated all other divinities to a single supreme God. Numerous deities were merely speculative abstractions. The Supreme Brahma of Aryan monotheisms was inaccessible and men were driven to propitiate lower gods and goddesses. The central idea of Judaism is that the Lord known as Jehovah is the creator and sustainer of the universe, the One eternal and infinite God, whose almighty hand is manifest throughout all nature and all history. According to the Bible "There is but One God. He is the Creator. He is supreme. He is the judge of all men."

Referring to God, Guru Nanak says in Japji :

"Through His Will He created all the forms of things,
But His Will can not be expressed.

It is through His Will the stream of life doth flow,
Some are exalted and are in higher life, others are born low."

Again,

"There are skies above skies
and earths below earth,
And man's mind is tired of this great search.

It can not reach the end of His vastness.

How can the Infinite be reduced to the finite,

All attempts to describe him are lost.

The Infinite knows the Infinite."

Monotheism of Guru Nanak

By : Prof. Abdul Majid Khan

In the words of Guru Nanak, *Ik-Onkar* first formed Himself into *Sat Nam* (The Word)... i.e. the Eternal and All-Pervading Divine Spirit is the first manifestation of the Unmanifest, and in Him all that is, had its being. The whole universe flowed out of *Sat Nam*. He made all things end into Himself. He shall again absorb all things. It is *Nam* that ultimately leads back the manifest into the unmanifest. Guru Nanak was a firm believer in the Divine Unity, in the Oneness and Supremacy of God as it is promulgated in the institutes of Mohammad.

Sat in Sanskrit and *hagg* in Arabic mean truth and in the

Quranic words, truth meets the requirements of wisdom, justice and right.

The founder of Sikhism, like the founder of Islam, denounced idolatry and ritualism. It is often observed that Guru Nanak was a liberating and a renewing force. He carried on a non-violent crusade against the rigours of caste and meaningless symbols. He knew that caste had all along been the bane of India. Prophet Mohammad secured for the first time in history, on the foundation of a monotheistic faith the political unity of Arabia. Likewise, Guru Nanak, for the first time in the history of India, tried hard to secure the social

solidarity of this country on the foundation of a monotheistic faith.

Corollary To Monotheism

The natural corollary to monotheism is oneness of humanity; under heaven there is only one vast family, known as mankind. Guru Nanak rightly remarked, "the True God is One who unites all." In the words of Guru Arjan Dev, who always correctly interpreted the message of the founder of the faith—Baba Nanak, "There is One Father and we all are His children."

Guru Ram Dass also declared "Thou art in each thing, in all places,

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O, God, thou art the one existent Being."

Guru Nanak, who had no patience with humbug and hypocrisy, rose to great height of reality when he said, "Religion does not consist in patched coat, nor in a yogi's staff, neither in ashes heaped over the body. Religion does not consist in carrings worn or in a shaven head or in blowing of horns. Abide in God amid the temptations of this world, thus, thou shall find the way to religion."

Religion of Humanity

Religious orthodoxy has a certain inevitable narrowness and exclusiveness. To excessive importance to the symbols and rituals is to ignore the essence of religion. Rising above the externals of both Hinduism and Islam, Guru Nanak resolutely refused to confine his vision of truth with the limits of either religion. He endeavoured to harmonize both religions by eliminating their symbols and external features and stressing the supreme necessity of divine love. He preached the religion of humanity. Fanaticism and intolerance he thoroughly detested. To him, God was light and beauty.

"Every where is spread Thy Light; wherever I see, I see His Presence," was the belief of Guru Nanak.

He adds:

"In every being, in every heart,

God has hidden His spirit;

In every soul, in every heart
burns His light,

Through the Guru's wisdom
the thick veil is rent.

The Absolute One is then
revealed in fearless Self-
Existence."

Guru Nanak gave man a pivotal position in the universe, when he said, "there is no Hindu and there is no Muslim." He always talked as a prophet of the people and never felt or thought in terms of castes or creeds or colours. In other words, he never referred to the superiority of any particular religion, for he held that the fundamentals of all religions were alike. The founders of various faiths, at different times and different climes, tried to cure the ills of humanity. Baba Nanak thought the eternal conflict has been between egoism and altruism, between pleasure and duty, between selfishness and service of others. He made persistent efforts to reduce the complex phenomenon of social life to the law of love, of all-embracing love.

As a lover of humanity, Guru Nanak came to the conclusion that the real cause of the misery of the people was their diversity of belief, due only to geographical and historical causes.

He sagaciously laid the foundation of 'Sangat' or mixed congregation, where like-minded persons derived inspiration for remoulding their outlook on life and for imbibing the right spirit. The establishment of free community kitchen regardless of the distinctions of caste, creed, colour or status in life helped a good deal to lay the foundation of a casteless, classless, democratic society.

Guru Nanak was a monotheist through and through. For a long time, mankind had been plagued by the undesirable and destructive elements of hate and violence, of racial and religious prejudice and distinctions of class riches. Guru Nanak was a prophet of peace, his role was that of a reconciliator between race and race, religion and religion, and man and man. Inasmuch as he believed in the one-ness of God, he stood for liberty, equality and fraternity, under the sun. It is true that the ideal of service and the inculcation of a spirit of brotherhood were significant features of almost all the

schools of religious revival in this country, but it was in Sikhism alone that a sense of corporate unity gradually evolved. It was mainly due to the fact that Guru Nanak repeatedly stressed the significance of monotheism, and fatherhood of God is mean-

ingful only when there is brotherhood of humanity. This is the core of the message of Guru Nanak. His monotheism was of moral grandeur, in the final analysis. It had a supreme significance.

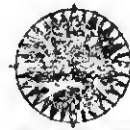
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Did Gurn Nanak propound a new philosophy or was he concerned with a way of life which finally culminated in the merging of the finite into the Infinite? This raises the question, what is philosophy? Philosophy is a Greek word which means love or pursuits of wisdom. Philosophy has also been used to mean search for knowledge. In the West, it is used primarily for three things; one, the search for truth through logical reasoning; secondly, an analysis of the ground of and concepts expressing fundamental beliefs and thirdly it is used for all learning except technical studies. In the East, philosophy is applied to fundamental questions relating to the nature of life and existence, spirit and matter, being and thinking. It pertains to the origin of universe and the nature of man and his role on earth. It is chiefly concerned with the meaning and purpose of human life in metaphysical terms.

There are two ways of studying life or the reality of life. One way is to study the external world and search the problem of the reality of life. It is done through logical analysis of human reactions and there is no place in it for God or any supernatural force. The other way is to start with the inner experience and reach out to the world of phenomenon. This is the approach of the Indian philosophy. It postulates that God and soul are concepts which cannot be understood through abstract reasoning, but it is through the spiritual experience that they can be apprehended. This knowledge is not gained through the normal processes of the mind but through the transcendental state of *smadhi*. In other words, it is through mysticism that the consciousness of God and soul can be gained. The Western mind does not accept mysticism. Plato rejected religious beliefs and propounded a rational system of philosophy. Buddha rejected philosophy and initiated a new religion based on mystical enlightenment.

It is to the credit of Upanishadic saints and seers that unfettered by dogma, mythology and superstition, boldly and fearlessly, they asked and sought answers to questions such as Whence this life? What is its purpose? Who created the world? Was it God or someone else? Is matter the original cause of all things? Was this world real or imaginary? What happens when we die? Out of these discussions emerged two schools of Indian philosophy; the Idealist school and the Materialistic school. The former believed that God was the creator of the universe and latter was of the view that matter

Road To Sachkhand

By : Sardar Balwant Singh Anand

per se was the basis and original cause of all things. The Upanishadic seers of the Idealistic school were thrilled with the discovery of *Braman* and *Atma*. Some idea of this discovery can be had from the dialogue between Udalaka and his son Svetaketu as described in the Chandogya Upanishad. When the son returned after completing his studies at the university, the father asked him whether he was satisfied with his studies. The son replied, somewhat proudly, that he had learnt all that knowledge could bestow upon him. The father asked him, "Do you know what is behind the eye that sees, behind the ear that hears and behind

the tongue that speaks? When a man dies, eyes, ears and tongue are all there but they do not perform their functions." The son was humbled for he had no answer to the question raised. The father explained to him through the use of several similes the nature of Reality or the Truth (*satya*). He explained the famous saying *Tat Tvam Asi* (That art Thou). The only Reality is *Brahm*, the rest is all transient and the human soul is part of the Reality. It is subtle essence that sees, hears and speaks. The individual soul merges in God and loses its individuality as rivers do in the sea, as salt does in water and the subtle essence lives in the

seed which sprouts as a tree. Udalaka told him, "That art Thou". This discovery of God and soul and their relationship led to other concepts about the creation of the world, karma, samsar and moksh.

Guru Nanak also rejected the view that knowledge gained through the study of books or dialectical analysis could lead to the consciousness of God. Learning was useful for worldly pursuits but intellectualism, bookishness and endless discussions had no place in the world of spiritualism. He gained his knowledge of Indian philosophy not from his study under the guidance of Pandit Baij Nath Shastri or Maulvi Qutb-ud-din but his meeting with fakirs and sadhus who came to spend the winter months in the forest not far from Talwandi. But it was above all the mystic experience

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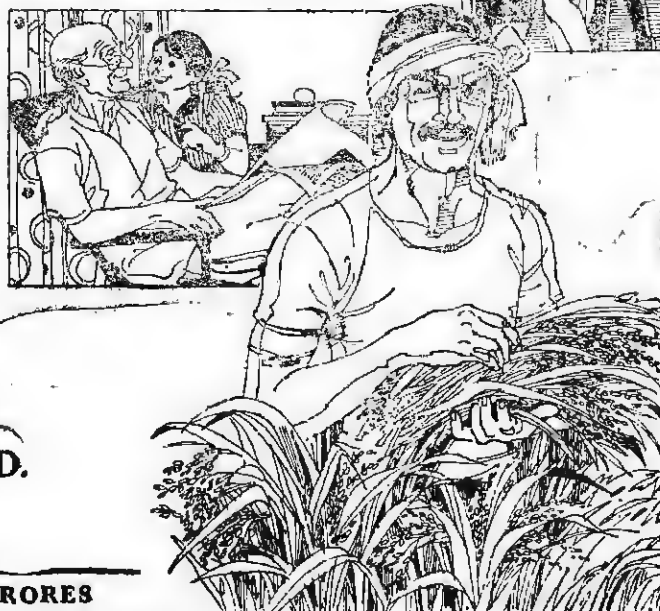
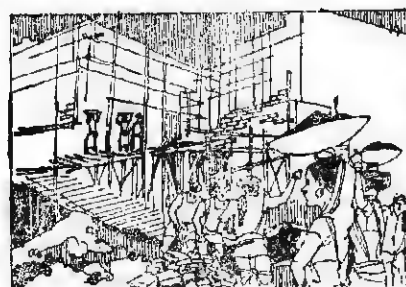
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he underwent while bathing in the rivulet Bein at Sultanpur that provided him answer to all the questions raised by the Upanishadic seers. For the first time on August the 20th, 1507, he stood face to face before God and was assigned the task of spreading God's Name among the people. He had no doubts about the creation of the universe and the meaning and purpose of life. He said :

He the Lord created Himself and assumed He Himself the Name,
And then he created nature and abiding within it.
He revelled in His wonder.
Yea, abiding in Thy creation,
Thou keepest all in Thy eye and art pleased.

Guru Nanak has his own vision of God as described in the *Mul Mantra*, "The One and Only God, whose Name is True, the Creator, the All-pervading, without fear, without hate, Immortal, Unborn, Self-existent, Enlighner, Gracious."

Guru Nanak assimilated the concepts of *karma*, *samsar* and *moksh* in his system but his concept of the world is altogether different from that of the ancient Indian philosophers. He did not regard the world as an illusion and a vale of tears. He subscribed to the philosophy of world and life affirmation; it is a world in which God Himself lives and, therefore, life should be full of work and activity. He says :

"Creating the world of life and implanting the Name in it, God made it Dharma's seat".

The world is presented as a place where through fruitful activity, *simran* and *sewa*, man could fashion his own karma, which would ultimately lead him towards self-realisation. It is interesting to compare his vision of life with that of Jainism which presents a most fearful picture of man's life on earth. In a parable man is presented as hanging upside down in a well, with a gigantic serpent waiting below to devour him and an elephant above to crush him. At the edge of the well is a tree with a honey comb from which drops of honey fall into his mouth and give him some comfort but the roots of the tree are being eaten by black and white rats (day and night) and the all consuming time must send him down the pit. It is not surprising that Jainism preached renunciation and the mortification of the flesh. Guru Nanak rejected renunciation and advocated living full and active life based on ethical principles. In this way, he presented both karma and *samsar* (the cycle of births and deaths) which could be manipulated by man himself provided he followed the road the Sachkhand for the achievement of *moksh*.

It is not enough to say that of the three margas advocated by the ancient sages viz. *Gyan marga*, *Karam marga* and *Bhakti marga*, Guru Nanak selected the *Bhakti marga*. Guru Nanak regarded *moksh* as the highest development of mystic consciousness. For the attainment of this consciousness, a regimented system of living is prescribed. The first step is to accept the world and life as though they were ordained by the Lord. The art of righteous living has to be learnt and its value system has to be accepted and practiced. The concept of good living has to merge in the concept of Dharma. The next step is the search for the Guru who will initiate you to *simran* and contemplation on the Name of the Lord. The result will be that you will be cleansed of all sins and you will sense a strange feeling of Anand and Bliss within you. This con-

tact with the God realised. Guru will free you from all worldly fears. As a result you will perceive God manifested in all things, within and outside yourself and the music of spheres will ring in your ears. As your soul is diffused with the Universal soul, in jubilation you will sing the praise of the Lord in company of His saints. The next stage will be that of *Vairaga*, the strange sense of detachment from the world of *maya*. This detachment will result in the attachment and admiration of the Beloved One and a consuming longing to meet him. You will speak of nothing but about the indescribable Lord. The last stage will be that of *Sehj*, the state of equipoise, when through the Grace of God, the door of Sachkhand will be opened to you and in a state of perfect harmony, you will gain consciousness of complete union with the

Lord. The concept of the Grace of God was a new concept introduced by Guru Nanak. The road to Sachkhand is long and arduous and patiently the seeker must wait for the Infinite to find his own way to emancipate him. Says Guru Nanak :

Usher me into Thy boundless Abode,
That Nanak attain to Thee,
The life of all life, through equipoise,
And by Thy Grace, he be emancipated.

And again, he says :

When the Lord has mercy,
one contemplates Him,
And tender becomes one's soul
and one is attuned to Him,
And one's soul merges in the Absolute One,
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The formation of Sikh religion was commenced by Guru Nanak in 1469 A.D. & completed by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 A.D. out of the two theistic religions already existing in India at that time some Muslims and many Hindus embraced the new Sikh religion. The present Sikh population in the world is about one and a half crore and the increase is due to both factors, addition from Hindus and general population growth. In America, Europe and other foreign countries also some people voluntarily adopted this new religion. But whereas in those foreign countries Christians are Christians, Muslims are Muslims and so on, here in India the position is different so far as relations of Hindus with others are concerned. No doubt Hinduism is one of the most ancient world religions. Its Vedas constitute one of the earliest books of scripture. The fundamental principle about existence of One Supreme God was declared in the Upanisads earlier than by any other holy book of the world.

On account of such factors of being most ancient and in some respects earliest, the Hindus of India have come to treat the other three religions arising from India, Buddhists,

Sikhs to have a Punjabi speaking State.

In Asian Games of 1982 the Sikhs were humiliated and treated as second class citizens of India. Ultimately the Congress (I) Government with its dominant Hindu majority, after making Army preparations at Chakrata and other places for at least two years, before Bhindranwale's terrorism erupted from Golden Temple, ordered, in June this year, the attack by its mighty Army on Golden Temple. The reason advanced was to liquidate the terrorist activities which Bhindranwale and his followers were carrying on from inside the Temple. Many commentators have described such terrorism as due to fundamentalism of Bhindranwale.

In recent times the word fundamentalism has become very common and the basic principles contained in scriptural books of a religion are described as fundamentalism of that religion. The meaning of this word as given in Oxford Dictionary is a Maintenance, in opposition to modernism, of traditional orthodox beliefs such as the inerrancy. (freedom from error) of scripture and literal acceptance of the creeds as fundamentals of Protestant

According to Sikh fundamentalism, all human beings, without distinction of caste and creed, are equal.

Jains and Sikhs also as Hindus forming branches of Hinduism. They have acquired a tendency to treat themselves superior as a trunk is to its branches, and do not take kindly to any of these religions claiming itself to be separate from Hindus. It is therefore that Hinduism has been at pains to absorb in itself all new religious ideologies propagated in India whether by any Hindu saints such as Kabir, Ravi Das, Nam Dev etc. or by teachers of other religions.

The recent nineteenth century movement of Arya Samaj, based on a new interpretation of the contents of Vedas, has given further stimulus to the sense of Hindu superiority resulting in criticism of so many other religions and saints of God in the Samaj's holy book, *Satyarth Prakash*. Such ideas of superiority in Hindus of India have also formed a major factor in creating great misunderstanding between Sikhs and Hindus of India. This Hindu mentality has been working ever since Independence in 1947. It gave vent in the Census Operations of 1951 onwards when many Punjabi speaking Hindus declared Hindi as their mother tongue in order to debar the

Christianity". Even when Christianity is mentioned, the term is equally applicable and is being actually applied, to other religions as well. With such meanings some countries of our world treat Fundamentalism as so bad that it should not be mixed up with secular affairs and politics, while other treat it so good as to increase the merits of their political systems.

As to what makes it good or bad, we have to consider a few concrete examples. For Hinduism, Vedas, its most sacred scriptural books, describe sanctity of cow as "whosoever regarding the cow as fruitless, cooks her flesh at home God makes beggars of his sons and grandsons"—(*Atharva Veda XII-4-38*). In Islam, the holy Quran similarly says about flesh of swine "He has made unlawful to you only that which dies of itself and blood and flesh of swine"—(*Sara 2-174*).

For Sikhs the only book of scripture is the Adi Granth and Guru Gobind Singh declared this Granth as containing the spirit of the Gurus and bowed before it while leaving his physical body in 1708 A.D. Earlier in 1699 A.D. the Guru had prescribed certain disci-

Sikh Religion And Fundamentalism

By : Sardar Isher Singh

plines and rules which were essential for the Khalsa, but were allowed to be included in subsidiary books called *Rehnamas*. Fundamentalism being what is contained in the scriptural books, Sikh Fundamentalism is constituted by the contents of Guru Granth Sahib, the authority of which is to be observed to find out all fundamental principles of Sikh religion. Against the example of cow and swine indicated above, Guru Granth Sahib says "If it is essential for some to avoid flesh of cow and for others flesh of swine, says Nanak, what is more essential to be avoided by all, is the practice of usurping rights of others". This principle is not sectarian and orthodox but universal. If the principles about cow and swine are treated good by some and bad by others and there have been numerous Hindu-Muslim riots for them.

the corresponding principle of Sikh Fundamentalism can also apply to secular affairs of a State. This is one simple example but in fact in Guru Granth Sahib there is nothing which is not of universal application.

Briefly mentioning one other example, if in Hinduism principle of Varnadharma creates inequality between human beings and in Islam the payment of *Zakat* tax creates inequality between Muslims and non-Muslims, according to Sikh Fundamentalism, all human beings, without distinction of caste and creed, are equal. Along with such equality Guru Granth Sahib emphasises that light of the same One God should be seen in every human being—(*Har bin avar na dekho koily*). Further it is strongly emphasised therein that service of human beings is service of God Himself. The Sikhs daily pray for welfare of all—(*Sarbat ka bhalla*). All moral values which apply to all human beings, are strongly stressed in Guru Granth Sahib and so are the common evils to be avoided. One evil to avoid which greatest stress is laid therein is selfishness and self pride which is termed '*Haumai*'. Such Sikh Fundamentalism does not permit killing of any innocent persons. If Bhindranwale or any other has been carrying on such terrorism, it is not due to Sikh Fundamentalism but due to lack of it.

No Sikh, worth the name, can support such activities which are condemnable. But in this matter one other aspect cannot be ignored.

When after 1977 Janta Government was ruling at Centre and Akali Party in Punjab, Congress(I) of Mrs. Gandhi contacted about twenty Sikh saints of Punjab to work in opposition to Akalis. Others refused but Congress (I) men succeeded in inducing young dynamic Sant Bhindranwale to accept Government offer. He and Amreek Singh of AISSF opposed Akalis, along with Congress (I), in S.G.P.C. Elections of 1979 but were able to capture only four out of 150 seats. Bhindranwale also worked for Congress (I) in 1980 Parliamentary Elections which brought Congress (I) again in power. Congress (I) had accordingly a soft corner for Bhindranwale who was not arrested or was released when arrested on suspicion of some terrorist activities.

However it is more than evident now that ever since coming into power in 1980, Mrs. Gandhi carried a sense of vengeance against Akali Party which was the only party that had carried on peaceful agitation against Emergency throughout the period when it lasted. She always acted against Punjab in all matters like Chandigarh, River water, allotment of industries etc., which were to benefit all Punjabis, but for which Punjabi Hindus, were quite cool, leaving Akali Party to champion those common causes. For more than two years when Akalis sent lakhs of Sikhs to jails and hundreds of them lost their lives, Mrs. Gandhi remained so rigid as not to accept any of their main demands. This situation frustrated not only Akalis but also AISSF and Sant Bhindranwale. The latter lost all faith in his one time ally, the Congress (I). Dynamic as he was, he overstepped the border of Longowal's peaceful agitation, which according to him could not succeed with a leader like Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

Mrs. Gandhi is being considered now as one of the skillful and shrewd politician of the world. She has a God-given gift of sweet voice and a talent to win people by her rhetoric.

But this very gift has given her a high sense of pride. Her recent successes in Asian Games, Non-aligned and Commonwealth conferences, has added much to that sense and she now considers herself all powerful to adopt any means, fair or foul, to further her political objectives. Evidently in this game of politics, she has accepted the path originally chalked out by Italian political philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli, which separated politics from restraints of religion and morality and by which politics came to be called a 'game of evil doers'. Recently we observed in India, Congress (I) game of toppling Governments in Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir and Andhra. What means were adopted, what evil steps were taken by Bhaskra Rao Government during his one month rule and what evil the youth wing of Congress (I), N.S.U.I (I) did at Nagpur are recent events giving glimpses of the evil game of Congress (I) politics. But the most glaring example is the Blue Star Operation at Golden Temple. The experts say that such an occurrence has not been witnessed at any time before, any where in the world. The fullfledged attack of the mighty Indian Army equipped with all types of modern weapons including tanks with 105 mm guns, C.S. gas etc., was not on any enemy from outside India but on a section of people of India itself and that at a place which is most sacred for that section. Besides colossal loss of life of innocent persons, and sacred buildings, the most painful loss was of Sikh Reference Library. This Special Library contained besides thousands of valuable books in Punjabi, English, French, Assamee, Bengali, Sindhi etc., also about twenty thousand hand written rare documents including 2500 hand written volumes of Guru Granth Sahib, one having a page written by Guru Tegh Bahadur himself. This Library was put on fire on June 7 after Sant Bhindranwale and all alleged terrorists in the Temple Complex had been liquidated. All these actual facts make it amply clear that the Army was indoctrinated and instructed by Congress (I), which sent it, to give hardest possible blow to the Sikh Community so that it may learn a lesson about the power of Mrs. Gandhi. The Army carried out the orders and treated every Sikh inside the Complex as enemy and Khalistani, including tender aged children who did not know what Khalistan means.

In fact majority of Sikhs in India, including the Longowal led Akalis never demanded Khalistan because the Sikhs are

settled in all parts of India and so are their historical Guardians. The Sikhs consider India as their own country and have made more sacrifices than any other community for its Independence and during all its wars before and after Independence. Mrs. Gandhi goes on repeating that all Indians should work for unity and integrity of India, but it is she herself who has given the hardest kick to the Sikhs who have been most patriotic to the country and best friends of Hindus, before, at the time of Partition and thereafter, she has played a hero's role to alienate the Sikhs not only by Bluestar action but by every action Congress (I) performed thereafter before withdrawal of Army from the Temple. Even subsequent thereto, the Sikhs have been hounded and hunted in Punjab treating every one as

second class citizen. How ridiculous it is that as against the interests of a whole Community of Sikhs of Punjab, to safeguard which, the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi had sworn by God, Mrs. Gandhi is treating at par, rather higher, the interests of Bhajan Lal who, for settling Chandigarh issue, is asking a territory of Punjab which is not even touching Haryana. But if for securing her Party rule both in Punjab and Haryana through the next Elections, the P.M. wants to crush the Sikh Community permanently, she should well understand that she can never succeed in such a venture. If the Sikhs have to live in India, as they do want, they must live with honour, as equals, not as second class citizens. It is high time the Congress (I) may mend its policy in treating the Sikhs,

if it really wants unity and integrity of India.

After Congress (I) torpedoed the Government-Akali talks on 13-14 February, 1984, through calculated evil action of Bhajan Lal inflicting great humiliation on innocent Sikhs in Haryana, all Sikhs became certain about bad intentions of Government not to settle Punjab problem by peaceful talks. Thereafter Bhindranwale became still more powerful and began to build defences in Golden Temple Complex and declared that he will also teach a lesson to Government when its Army attacks the Temple which he rightly anticipated in spite of repeated assurances from Government side that Army will not enter Golden Temple. And he did teach a lesson to the Army and the Government which sent it, journalist Shekhar Gupta, who had witnessed the Army attack, said "All the Generals and other Officers involved in the Operation admit that it was the toughest challenge of their lives, one of the kind they would not fancy facing again." In fact in this battle of Golden Temple the Government suffered defeat not Bhindranwale who sacrificed his life to uphold his wards. In spite of the fact that majority of Sikhs do not support Bhindranwale's action to make Golden Temple as a battlefield, none can deny his bravery and sacrifice for a cause he treated as in Panthic interest. He was killed but not his Sikh spirit. This chapter of Congress (I)'s evil on one side and the bravery of the Sikh spirit on the other, will remain a unique event of our world's history.

However Sant Bhindranwale has left a lesson for Khalsa Panth also. The Akal Takht is under management of S.G.P.C. on whose behalf Jathedar Kirpal Singh is at present exercising the high authority attaching to the Takht by Sikh traditions. This Takht or throne is not a throne of any secular or political ruler, but a religious throne for propagating Sikh religion. Of course for Sikhs religion covers human life as a whole. If "Nam japna" or 'worship of God' is one of its principles Dharam Kirt and Wand Chhakna are also its principles derived from the teachings contained in Guru Granth Sahib. Killings of innocent persons and of political and religious adversaries is not consistent with tenets of Sikh religion.

Guru Nanak reformed even Sajjan Cheat, Bhumia thief, Koda devil and numerous others by sweet reason, love and preaching only and that is the right way. When Bhindranwale was carrying on his terrorist

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activities from Akal Takht, many Sikhs, who valued religious principles, suggested issue of a Hukamnama to check such killings. But the Jathedar Akal Takht and the S.G.P.C. could not dare to do so as that meant going against Bhindranwale. Had there been high powered 'Panj Piaras' attached to Akal Takht the needful could have been done and the subsequent great holocaust could have been avoided. The Sikh community already having Amritsar as its religious Capital, Akal Takht as its religious throne, it can bring about a Religious Raj of the whole world for the Sikhs only if the Sikhs care to have a world wide organisation bound up with the high powered Panj Piaras attached to Akal Takht as a permanent basis. Such Religious Raj can solve all problems of Sikhs which at present we find very difficult.

Subsequent to the Bluestar havoc, when so many Akali Dal and S.G.P.C. leaders were in jails, to meet the special situation, five head priests, who were considered suitable by the present S.G.P.C. authorities were appointed on ad hoc basis, as Panj Piaras and they did very praiseworthy work in

Akal Takht is not a throne of any secular or political ruler, but a religious throne for propagating Sikh religion.

dealing with the present difficult situation. They were able to free the Golden Temple Complex from the control of the Army. It is not right for any Sikh to criticise Panj Piaras in such a position. But the situation demands further necessary steps.

Besides Akal Takht three other Takhts connected with Guru Gobind Singh formed the four centres for preaching Sikh religion on all the four sides of the world. Damdama Sahib was added subsequently by the Panth as fifth Takht. But it is evident that so far the religious side has been sadly neglected and the result is that corruption and evil is rampant all over the world, much more in our own country of India which demanded our immediate attention.

We the Sikhs, hardly two per cent of India's population, are living with 82 per cent of Hindus. Barring a few exceptions the educated intellectual section of Hindus do not care to study Sikh religion and have a strong superiority complex to

absorb others in Hinduism. This is borne out even by the opinion of some Hindus themselves who value truth.

We quote here the words of one such Hindu Sanskrit scholar, who as an exception, did study Sikhism besides his own religion and who was frank enough to admit the Hindu sense of superiority. He was Swami Dharma Theertha who said in 1946 "It (Hindu creed) is marked by such claims as these: the Hindu civilisation is the best in the world, Hindu religion is the highest glory of man, Hindu institutions are the models of righteousness, Hindu nationalism is peculiarly its own and unlike those of other nations. The parading of these stupendous claims and exhibition of self-esteem is only a prelude to a justification of all the evils and wickednesses of caste and priestcraft as the unique contribution of Hindu Culture." And about Guru Nanak Swami Dharma says "It was reserved for Guru Nanak to become the founder of a new order of things, a new nation free from many of

the foibles and superstitions of the Hindus of those days. He taught that God should be worshipped as the One Supreme Invisible Being and that salvation lay in a life of virtue, purity and good works and implicit faith in and surrender to God."

The Bluestar action on Sikhs has been one result of ignorance about Sikh religion of the ruling class of vast Hindu majority and their sense of superiority over others. The ousting of a few hundred terrorists from the Golden Temple could have been done in many other ways as where there is a will there is a way. But as shown by actual events here the will was to crush the Sikh community not brush aside a few hundred terrorists. It is high time that the Sikh Panth may organise itself under the leadership of Panj Piaras, become a strong world community who could preserve its separate identity and also propagate its universal Fundamentalism to others so that the prevalent evil and selfishness may give place to God worship, goodness and welfare of all.



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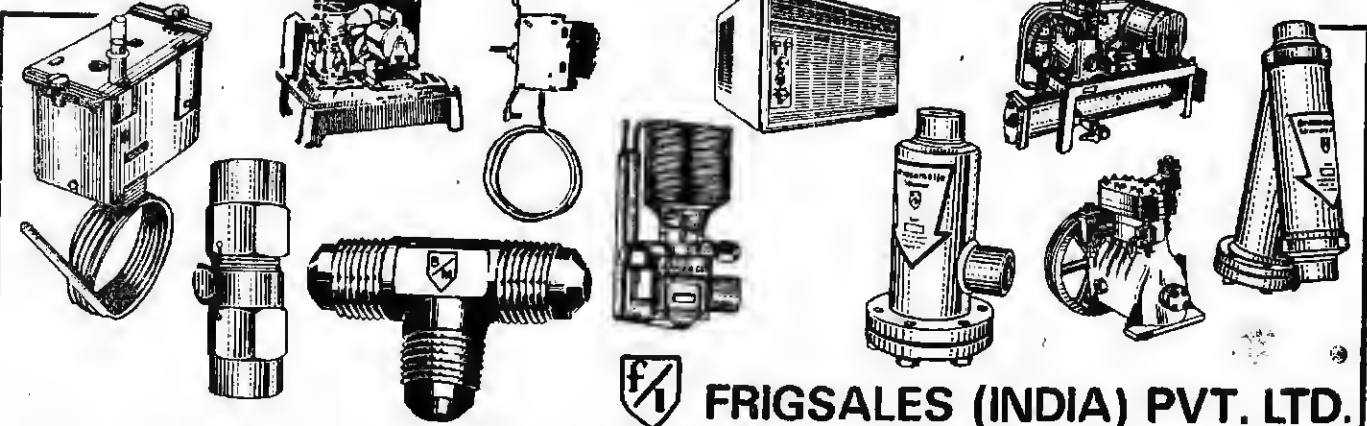


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By whom all men are made,
Nay, the whole universe is made of Him
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—Guru Nanak

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There is no place for caste system in Sikhism. All men are equal in the eyes of God, to whatever creed, caste or colour they belong. Distinctions based on caste are futile. Salvation is attained not on the basis of caste but good deeds.

At the time of Guru Nanak's birth in 1469, the Indian society was caste-ridden and had started showing fissiparous tendencies leading to gradual disintegration because of the inherent weakness of the caste system and the consequent rivalries among the different castes and sub-castes for recognition and domination. Dharma had died down and the people suffered from grave disparities, exploitation, subjugation and demoralisation. The absence of social justice with social discrimination and lack of reverence to human personality were symbols of deteriorating society. The people had lost all self respect.

The Sikh savant, Bhai Gurdas has described the condition of the society in these words :

The Hindus have four castes;
The Muslims are divided into four sects.

They fight with each other aimlessly with jealousy, arrogance and vanity.

(Bhai Gurdas Var 1, pauri)

Guru Nanak attacked the citadel of prevalent caste system. In Sikhism superiority and inferiority of castes is not recognised. Guru Nanak preached the equality of all men, irrespective of their caste. Guru Nanak declared that the distinctions based on caste were futile. His bitter attack was directed against the caste system and the hierarchical character of Hindu society. He declared :

"What power has caste? It is righteousness that is counted. Whosoever tastes poison will die

His caste does not matter.

And (Majh)

"Judge people by the light within thee

And do not ask their caste for hereafter none is differentiated by his caste." (Asa)

Guru Nanak vehemently preached against *varnas* and castes which had disintegrated the Indian society. He said :

"God does not ask caste
Learn the way of truthful living

For one's deeds proclaim one's caste and respect.

(Prabhati)

Guru Nanak did not make any distinction among the different castes. He said :

"Kashatriya, Brahman, Sudra and Vaishya

I address you all together

(Suhi)

Guru Nanak stood entirely for the abandonment of the idea of caste. He was absolutely for the equality of all men and caste had no meaning for him. He was ruthlessly against the superiority claimed by Brahmins and other higher castes. His idea was that the religious and moral worth in a man was of greater value than birth in a high caste family.

Guru Nanak endeavoured to create a casteless and classless society in which there was no exploitation and all were regarded as equal. He castigated the rich who lived on the exploitation of the poor and advocated powerfully the cause of the poor, the depressed, the down-trodden and the underprivileged. He was not only moved by their condition but also shared people's sorrows and joys, living like one

of them and speaking in their own language. The Guru exalted the role of labour and hard work.

Guru Nanak firmly believed that in the next world the castes are not acknowledged. He said :

"No caste is acknowledged in the next world;

Caste is not recognised, there dwells new order of beings;

Those whose accounts are honoured are good."

(Rag Asa)

And again :

"Nobody calls by the containers name in which milk and ghee are kept.

So is the case of God's lover, to whatever caste he belongs."

(Rag Tilang)

During one of his missionary tours, Guru Nanak visited Haridwar, a great centre of Hindu pilgrimage. Here he took some fire from the burning chulla for cooking his meals. When he

touched the wood of the devotee, he became red with anger and cried in rage that his meals had been polluted by a person whose caste was not known. The Guru said :

"Ignorance is the drummer woman;

Cruelty the butcheress; slander the sweeperess,

And the anger that destroyeth the world is like a Chandal,

Of what use is it, O Brahmin if one draweth the lines round

thy kitchen when all the four low castes are within thee."

(Rag Sri)

The pride of caste, lineage, learning, wealth, power influence and body's charms cannot bring peace to the soul. It should be equipped with merit. Pride, lust, wrath and attachments should be thrown off, only then God could be attained. The soul should be elevated through self discipline to be able to enter the realm of the spirit and find the self of all selves there.

Guru Nanak said :

"Vain is the pride of caste, vain is the pride of name,

The Lord alone giveth refuge to all;

He who himself stimuleth glory (is vain)

For only he is accepted, if the Lord accepteth him."

(Sri Rag)

Guru Nanak divided men into two categories only—*Gurmukhs* and *Manmukhs*—those who turn their focus towards God and practice truth and those who follow their own whims and practice deceit, falsehood and are engrossed in sensual pleasures. Guru Nanak said :

"If clothes get polluted when soiled by blood

How can the minds of those who suck human blood be pure.

(Var Majh)

Guru Nanak preached that the people, irrespective of their caste or creed should remember one God only. They should pray to him to seek salvation. It is only He and He who can bestow favours on them only those who do not remember His Nam are to be considered low castes. He said :

"He is as Great as is His beneficence

He who makes the night and the day

He who does not remember

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Him is indeed a low caste wretch

Without Thy Name, One is a low caste. (Asa)

Guru Nanak ordained people not to accept caste from birth. People's actions determine their caste. He said:

Do not bother for birth and caste:

only recognise the truth,
For the real caste lies in the actions and performance. (Prabhati)

Guru Nanak took practical steps to abolish caste system. The first of these was the institution of *Pangat*—Guru Ka Langar. Guru Nanak, when settled at Kartarpur, started Langar, free kitchen where food was served to the visitors. Everyone high and low, rich and poor was given the same treatment and was served the same food, prepared in the same kitchen and distributed in the same manner. Bonds of centuries old caste system were broken. A spirit of sacrifice, service and brotherhood was developed and the *langar* became the symbol of equality, fraternity and brotherhood. Other Sikh Gurus continued the tradition.

Another institution of importance is *Sangat*, the congregation, which helped in removing caste distinctions. In the Sikh shrines, people of all castes and creeds come and pray to God. All sit on the floor irrespective of their status, high or low. No distinction is made between man and man.

Thus, Guru Nanak raised his voice against the prevailing caste system. He attacked the fortress of caste with such force and vehemence that he was able to effect deep breaches in its very foundations. By attacking the system, the Guru separated caste system from the religious sanctity to which it was attacked selfishly by the priestly class.

Guru Nanak not only condemned the caste system but he explained to the people the fundamental causes of growth of caste system. He blamed the priestly class who had connived at this development of the caste system by providing religious sanction to it. The high class people had taken shelter under the philosophy of *Karma* and attributed bad condition of the lower castes to *Karmas*. Deeds done by them in their previous life were held responsible for their present state of affairs which could not be improved upon their position as this was ordained by the Will of God. The *Karma* philosophy was moulded to suit their nefarious ends. No stone was left unturned by the

high caste people to explain to the low caste that they had to suffer as it was destined for them and no power on earth could lift them. They had to pacify themselves with whatever they had.

Karma philosophy was evolved to provide an inspiration to the people to perform noble deeds, not to indulge in evils so that they could attain salvation in the next world. This theory provided that by performing noble acts one could attain happiness in the next world. But with the passage of time the upper classes converted the philosophy to exploit the low castes. Those taking births in the low castes were told to reconcile to their miserable plight as they had indulged in evil deeds in their past lives and those who were born in the

high castes were exonerated from the philosophy of *Karma*. They were not reprimanded even if they had committed atrocities on the poor and the down-trodden as they had sanction of the Brahmins who were supposed to be the guardians of the religion.

Guru Nanak presented *Karma* philosophy in its true perspective. The people who were misinterpreting the scriptures were attacked vigorously. The people were told that everyone was born equal and only their actions could make them high or low and not the caste in which they happened to be born. The people were asked to shed off their caste prejudices and to come out of their inferiority complex to which they were reduced by the so-called upper classes. Guru Nanak said:

That which one doeth, the world knoweth the lord seeth all;

All try, but that alone happens

As the creator willeth

Hereafter power and caste are of no avail for a man comes into the world of God

They whose honour is recognised by the Lord they alone are honourable.

(Var Asa)

In short, there is no place for caste system in Sikhism. All men are equal in the eyes of God, to whatever creed, caste or colour they belong. Distinctions based on caste are futile. Salvation is attained not on the basis of caste but good deeds.

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Guru Nanak As A Poet

By : Prof. Hazara Singh

Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539) used the sublime art of poetry to propound the gospel of oneness of God, universal brotherhood of man and the importance of moral action as a means for achieving salvation. He composed about three thousand stanzas including the soul-inspiring hymns like *Japji*, *Asa Di War*, *Dakhni Onkar*, *Sidh Gosht* and *Bara Maha* (Tukhari). The impact of his gospel was so great and instant that an era of renaissance and regeneration ushered thereafter in India.

Prophet as a Poet

The hymns and songs of Guru Nanak Dev bubble with universal truths. They shower on the congregation nectar of spontaneous joy, equanimity and contentment. This efficacious quality of his poetry is attributed to the fact that it was a divine drive from within as well as the reaction of his sensitive mind to contemporary events. Indian society was torn by castes. The country was trampled by the invaders. Sincerity had been pushed out by sin and virtue had been shadowed by vice. His gospel is a superb combination of spiritual enlightenment and mundane observations. It is free from escapism, illusions and supernaturalism.

Three Stages of Guru Nanak's Poetry

The works of Guru Nanak Dev reflect three distinct stages of his mission. The first period resounds with youthful and revolutionary fervour directed against barren rites and hypocritical clergy. The sermon which he gave to his family

priest, who had been brought in to put on him the sacred thread (Janeu).

"Make mercy thy cotton, contentment thy thread, continence its knot, truth its twist, that would make a Janeu for the soul."

serves as an apt illustration of his crusade against superstitions, myths and above all the exploitation under their garb.

The second period (1498-1521) covers his missionary travels. It reveals his insatiable desire to seek truth, and gather knowledge by mixing with people of different cultures and religions. The hymns of that period are both metaphysical and devotional. They deal with the reality of God, soul and creation. The inspiring song which sprang from his lips, when he was offered worldly temptations during his visit to Kamrup (Assam).

"Were a mansion of pearls erected and inlaid with gems for me:

perfumed with musk, saffron, fragrant roses and sandal to confer delight

May it not be that on beholding these things

I may forget Thee,

O God, and not remember Thy name!

My soul burneth without Thee."

reveals the importance which the Guru attached to a truthful and virtuous conduct.

The third period (1522-1539) crowns the glory of his genius.

All major hymns such as *Japji*, *Tithan*, *Sidh Gosht*, etc. were composed during these years and they reflect his rich and varied experience, ardent imagination and profound philosophy. Divine grace, meditation of Nam, fear of God, belief in the Inevitable Will, obligation to good action, social ethics, splendour of nature, and sanctity of body are the predominant themes of that period. The *Japji* which is the preamble to almost every hymn, is the theological basis of all Sikh scriptures. Its description of the Divine

"There is one God,
Eternal Truth is His Name:
Maker of all things,
Fearing nothing and at enmity with nothing
Timeless is His image;
Not begotten, being of His Own Being,
By the grace of Guru, made known to man."

is graphic and soothing.

Japji not only reveals the glory of God and His vast creation extending over millions of planets and stars, but also stresses as follows the importance of a virtuous living:

"Make continence thy furnace, resignation thy goldsmith, understanding thine anvil, divine knowledge thy tools, the fear of God thy bellows, austerities thy fire, Divine love thy crucible, and melt God's name therein. In such a true mint the Nam shall be coined."

Diction and Imagery

The language used by Guru Nanak Dev was of the people among whom he lived and, hence, the effect of his teachings was immediate. The metaphors, symbols, allusions and similes used by him are from the every day life and they thus leave their effect deep and real. The imagery adorning his verses reveals not only his spontaneous love of nature but also impart a lyrical grace and mystical character to them. These characteristics of his style help in elevating the soul of his devotees and in transforming their conduct.

Lore of Eternal Wisdom

Many a couplet from his hymns have become household sayings for people and thus keep them on the right path. Here are a few illustrations:

"The conquest of mind is the conquest of the world."

"Truth is great, but greater still is truthful living."

"Why condemn the women, who are the progenitors of the princes."

"This wealth can be amassed through sinful deeds only but it does not go with the dead."

"Says Nanak, only that day one becomes poor when he forgets the Nam."

To conclude, the poetry of Guru Nanak Dev reveals the loftiest flight of human thought and emotion. The continual interplay of aesthetic, moral, humane and mystical imaginations lend it an irresistible charm. The truth, which it propounds, imparts it the quality of eternity.

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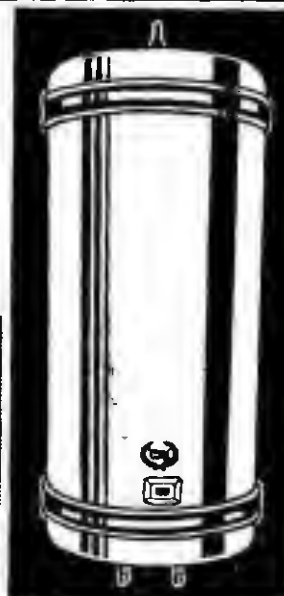
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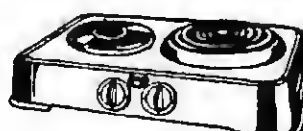
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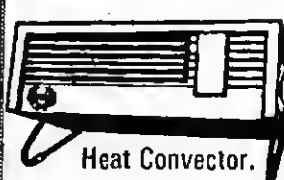
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Communal Harmony In Punjab

By : Sardar Joginder Singh, M.A.

Man is a social animal. He has an inner desire to live peacefully in the company of other people. But, surprisingly, even after centuries of material and intellectual progress he has not learnt how to live amicably with other members of the society. Religious ceremonies, moral homilies, social customs, panchayat rules and state regulations are all intended to train man in the art of peaceful living, but even these have not been able to achieve the desired object. Over the centuries, man has tried various types of social institutions and state-crafts but his longing to live in harmony with his neighbours has not so far materialised. It is difficult to say how many more experiments he will have to try before reaching the cherished goal.

History is full of both violent and non-violent events staged by stalwarts like Manu, Musa, the Buddha, Plato, Socrates, Christ, Mohammad, Chenghez, Baber, Marx, Gandhi and Hitler to establish societies of their own concepts, but from domestic right upto international forums, if there is anything lacking, it is mutual understanding, feeling of co-existence and communal harmony.

Complete and lasting communal harmony can be brought about through moral and spiritual approach.

What is needed most in Punjab today is how to live in an atmosphere of brotherliness, mutual confidence and toleration.

Not long time back, the boundaries of the Punjab extended from across the Indus to the Jamuna. Then N.W.F.P. on the west and Delhi-Agra on the east were cut off from its boundaries. Before the advent of British rule, people of all faiths used to live there in amity, sharing each other's joys and sorrows. But by 1947 so much bitterness was created among them that Hindus and Sikhs living across Wagah border were forced to come over to this side. Similarly, Muslims living on this side of the border had to cross over to the other. Leaving behind their hearths and homes and suffering untold miseries and humiliations, the refugees on both sides became foreigners in their own country.

Again, after resettlement, when the state was re-organised on linguistic basis, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh were detached, leaving behind a truncated Punjab. Even then this land was not spared and attempts were

made to declare it a bi-lingual state of Hindi-speaking Hindus and Punjabi-speaking Sikhs, although the Hindus, who declared themselves Hindi-speaking at the time of the census of 1951, actually spoke Punjabi in their homes and market places in the course of their business dealings. Thus a wedge was driven between the two communities and this is proving to be the root cause of all the troubles in the Punjab.

This sad state of affairs has set all Punjabis thinking because there is every danger of the separatist tendencies spreading among the jats and non-jats and further down among the Majhails and the Malavis. Already the existing cleavage between the urban and the rural population is deepening every day on account of diverse economic interests. We have to call a halt to this dangerous tendency and pray for some guiding star which can show the path of friendship and communal harmony. It was in similar circumstances that poet Mohd. Iqbal wrote his famous couplet *Phir utthi, akhar sada tauhid ki, Punjab se, Hind ko ik Marad-e-Kamal ne jagaiya khawab se*. That great son of the Punjab (Guru NANAK), who awakened the people from

but tried to reform those who were indulging in malpractices in the name of religion. In doing so he did not spare anyone, whether he was a Hindu, Yogi, Sanyasi, Jain or Muslim. He exposed their meaningless rituals and other hypocritical practices by pointing out courageously how those differed from the fundamental concepts of their own faiths and how those transgressed the basic human, moral and spiritual values. There are several hymns in Guru Nanak Bani which underline this approach. Here are some lines from those hymns by way of brief indications (references in brackets are the relevant page numbers of the *Adi Granth* :—

*Gali jag na hoi,
Ek drisht kar samsar janai jogi
kahai soi.* (p. 730)

(Yoga is not achieved by mere talking; real yoga lies in looking at and treating all alike).

*"Bahu bhekh kia dehi dukh
dia,
Souh ve jia apna kia . . .
Al mal khai sir chai pal,
Murakh andhe pat gava'i"* (p. 467)

(The more a man displays the hypocritical costumes of his sect, the more he causes

suffering to his body. . . . The man who goes about unshod, eats filth and pours ashes on his own head degrades himself through his own folly).

*"Sa sanyasi ja satgur sevai,
vichan aap gava'i,*

*Chadan bhojan ki aas na
kara'i, achint milai so pai"*. (p. 1013)

(True sanyasi is one who serves his guru selflessly. He does not bother about his clothing and food but takes whatever comes along his way unexpectedly).

*"Mussalman kahavan muskal,
ja hoi ta mussalman kahai,
Awal aul din kar mitha,
maskal mana mal musvai."* (p. 141)

(To be called a Muslim is difficult; only by adopting the faith of 'anliyas' and discarding of vices, like the worn-out rust, can one be entitled to be called a Muslim).

*"Kadi hal bal mal khai,
brahman navai jia aghai,
Jagi jugat na janai andh,*

teenai ajarhai ka bandh." (p. 662)

(The kazi makes sinful money by telling lies; the brahman sucks others' blood and then goes about bathing at places of pilgrimage; the yogi is ignorant of the path of communion with God. All the three provide wherewithal for self-destruction).

It will be noticed that the precepts and the practices of the same faith have been brought out to pin-point the differences between the two. Nowhere has the Hindu faith and its practices been compared with those of Muslim or other faiths. On the other hand, a Hindu has been told to be a good Hindu and a Muslim has been advised how to deserve being called a good Muslim.

To argue that during the days of Guru Nanak communal tensions did not exist or were not so acute as these are now, or Guru Nanak remained unaware or unmindful of those, will not be correct. Guru Nanak knew the whole situation very well. But he intentionally adopted the path of reformation rather than of confrontation. Referring to Hindu and Muslim faiths, he pronounced :—

*"Rah dovain ik janai, soi
sijhst"* (p. 142)

(These are the two paths; he who realises that both lead to the same destination will attain salvation.

Again :— *"Aithe janai sa jai
sinjhanst,
Hor Hindu Mussalmaney."*

*Sabhna ka dar lekha hai,
Karni bajhan tarai na kai."* (p. 952)

(Whoever sees God prevailing in this world will recognise Him in the next world also. All others, whether Hindus or Mussalmans, are meaningless chatterers. All are accountable in the Lord's court; no one will be redeemed without good deeds).

It is clear from these quotations from Gurbani that Guru Nanak's approach was not based on communal or group considerations. He wanted to rebuild the society with men of good intentions and good deeds, irrespective of their religious leanings. He talked of *gunwanti* (the virtuous), *auganwanti* (the defaulting) and *sahagni* (the endeared one); of *gurmukh* (the god-willed), *manmukh* (the self-willed and *sakat* (the mammon-worshipper), of *bhagai* (the

(Continued on Page 25)



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devotees) and *sansari* (the materialist), of *sachiar* (the truthful) and *kurhiar* (the untrue and deceitful), of *hans* (the swan-like unaffected soul) and *bagla* (the hypocritical heron), representing the two opposite attitudes of human mind. He advised every one to adopt the correct attitude and make oneself a better human being, without giving up his individual faith. That is why it is not possible to find from Guru Nanak Bani any indication as to which faith he liked better. For him human conduct was supreme and he emphasised this point by saying:—

"*Sachon orai sabh ko upar sach achar*" (p. 62)

(Truth is higher than every thing but higher still is truthful conduct).

In the light of this approach, if we like Hindus because they are Hindus, Muslims because they are Muslims, Sikhs because they are Sikhs, Jains, Christians, Parsis and others because they are born in those families, then let us be sure that we have not grasped Guru Nanak's teachings correctly. But if we start liking people of different faiths because they are good men and their conducts are humane we start treading the path leading to communal harmony. This is our common heritage on which the edifice of mutual love and understanding can be raised. In Guru Nanak's words:—

"*Guna ka hovai vasala, kadh vas laejai,
Je gun hoven sajauan, mil sanjh karjai.
Sanjh karijai guna kari, chod augan chaliat*" (p. 765)

(If one has a basketful of fragrant virtues, one can open the basket and enjoy the fragrance. It is but proper that we should share virtues with others and discard vices).

This is in direct contrast with our present day attitudes towards each other. We are guided by affinities of blood relationship, religious belief, country, caste, colour and race considerations, or on equation of bribe and corruption. It is on account of such considerations that mutual hatred and tensions occur.

Real strength of any society or organisation does not lie in the number of its members but in the measure of right thinking and right conduct they have imbibed from its promoters. What is, therefore, important is how to transform the baser instincts of man into higher and nobler instincts.

Out of the various social, cultural, economic, religious

and administrative factors which play an integral part in bringing about this transformation, let us examine a few under the following headings:—

Cultural

In order to create the spirit of patriotism among the people, it is very necessary to revive their love for their own language, literature, dress, food etc. It has always been the foreign rulers' policy to first destroy the cultural heritage of the subjugated people and make them adopt the foreign culture. Guru Nanak paid special attention to this side. He warned the people against calling themselves 'Mian' after the Muslim fashion and speaking their language, viz. Persian, as a sign of slavery, and also wear their dress to look like them. He said:

"*Ghar ghar 'Mian' sabhna jia boli awar tumari*" (p. 1191)

(In your families you have started calling each other 'Mian' and your language has also changed).

"*Neel bastar le kaprhe pehrai turk pathani amal kia*" (p. 470)

(You have donned blue clothes and adopted the practices of Turks and Pathans).

Economic

The cooperative social structure which Guru Nanak advocated had the following three important facets:—

(i) No one should remain idle. Manual labour should be made compulsory for all members of the society, including the leaders.

(ii) Service for common good, without expecting any special reward or compensation.

(iii) Freedom to use one's honest income for one's legitimate purposes and setting aside a portion thereof for common benefit.

These steps are necessary to avoid any one being exploited by others and also his being a parasite on others.

Social

Indian society suffers from some traditional drawbacks, like casteism, superstition and inequality of women. Guru Nanak took up these challenges boldly and spoke against these practices in the following words:—

Casteism

"*Our pir sadai mangan jai, Ta ke mool na lage pat*" (p. 1245)

(If one who proclaim himself guru or 'pir' and goes abegging, then better shun him).

"*Sa jat sa pat hai jehe karam, kamai*" (p. 1330)

(One's deeds alone shape one's caste and honour).

"*Neechan andar neech jat, neechi hu att neech
Nanak tin ke sang sath, vadhian seon kia rees.
Jithi neech samalian tithe nadar teri backhshish*" (p. 15)

(I am the lowliest of the lowly. What have I to gain from those who consider themselves great. God's grace descends where the lowliest and the humblest are looked after).

Superstition

"*Tant mant pakhand na janat*" (p. 766)

(God-oriented persons do not believe in tantric practices and meaningless mantras).

"*Marhi masani murhe jog nahin*" (p. 1190)

(Yoga does not lie in living in cremation grounds and around graves).

"*Sabho sutak bharam hai duje tagat jat*" (p. 472)

(Sutak or tabus associated with ceremonial uncleanness after child birth in a home are mere superstitions).

"*Saha ganeh na kare bichar, Sahe upar Ek-Onkar*" (p. 904)

(One having faith in God does not bother about suspicious days or timings; for him, the Lord Creator is above all such thinking).

Inequality of Women

"*So keu manda akhiat jit jammeh rajan,
Bhandho hi bhand upjai bhand bajhi na kai,
Nanak bhand bahra eko sacha sol*" (p. 473)

(Why should we speak ill of women when it is they who give birth to kings. Moreover, woman herself comes from a woman. No one comes into being except from a woman. Says Nanak, it is the one True God alone who does not owe His being to a female).

Administrative

Administration run by one's own people or by foreigners can become corrupt, unjust and repressive. It is also well-known that in following discriminatory and corrupt practices, the junior officials always by-pass their seniors; Guru Nanak, in his Bani, laid bare their malpractices of those connected with administrative and law and order machinery, and at the same time apprised them of their lawful duties, as will be clear from the following verses:—

"*Raje seenh mukkadam kute, Jai jagavan baithe sute*" (p. 1288)

(Kings behave like ferocious lions and their officials are greedy like dogs).

"*Lab pap dui raja mehta kur hoa sikdar*,

"*Kam neb sad puchia beh beh kare bichar,
Anehi rayat gian vihani bhahe bhare murdar*" (p. 468)

(Avarice and sins are respectively the king and the prime minister and spurious values have become the officials. Lust is the vice-minister who is consulted invariably. It is the council of all those which conducts the affairs of the society).

Those who care to understand the significance of these verses and the general teachings of Guru Granth Sahib will not fail to realise that human welfare lies in living with each other like brothers, leading honest life and sharing one's hard-earned income with the needy. Such people will never tread the path of hatred, deceit and violence. For them the right course to be adopted will be that of co-operation, service and good-will towards others.

Let us, in the end, summarise the result of the above analysis, keeping in view the situation prevailing particularly in the Punjab today and pinpointing the factors which militate against the establishment of communal harmony.

(a) Communal harmony is disturbed by religious, social, economic, political and administrative differences. It is also possible that, as pointed out by Prof. Pritam Singh in his article in "Panchbati Saadesh", clever and powerful politicians may be instrumental in raising disputes and creating tensions among different sections of the population in order to serve their own selfish ends. Therefore, it is very essential to locate such persons and beware of their machinations. It may be a difficult task and appear like going against the wind, but unless this is done it will be like beating about the bush.

Basically, differences are not so much communal as they are made out to be. Innocent and ignorant people are easily misguided, with the result that communal harmony is disturbed, sometimes between Hindus and Muslims and sometimes between Hindus and Sikhs. This can be set right if, instead of looking for outside help, righthinking persons of good intentions and independent views from all communities frequently get together, remove misunderstandings and re-create the desire to live amicably.

(b) Emotional affinities of different groups in the society are guided by similarities of language, culture and mode of living. It is, therefore, necessary to stress common points

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Guru Nanak at Kartarpur

By : Prof. Surjit Singh Gandhi

of our cultural heritage, although we may be professing different religious and political philosophies. Love for the country is also an important factor which holds together the people having different views and inclinations. But this love for the country need not be at the expense of love for one's religion and province. The latter need not be considered to be antagonistic to the former. In fact, both can exist and proper together, strengthening each other in their own spheres of activity. In fact, if patriotic feelings arise out of love for one's religion and state, then common bonds will get strengthened and harmonious living become easier.

(c) For achieving common objectives with joint efforts, our provincial and central leaders have to rise above self-interests. They have to show real spirit of selfless service and not always seek peculiar gains or gains of office in return for what they do.

The same thing will apply to those leaders who speak for their respective communities. Let all leaders set good examples by their own conduct and they will see miracles happening in the country. The sermons heard in temples, gurdwaras and mosques should not remain confined to the four-walls of those buildings but let their visible effects spread far and wide.

(d) In a democratic country like ours the Constitution plays a very crucial role. There should be a provision in the Constitution that no ruling party should be able to make one community fight with the other. It should be the duty of the government in power to assist opposing groups to live peacefully with each other, rather than create dissensions and ill-feelings among them. Guru Nanak had this role of the leaders in view when he said :—

"Nanak Satgur aisa janai jo
sabh se lai milai jeo."
(p. 72)

(He alone is a true guru, says Nanak, who unites all in common brotherhood),

Needless to stress that complete and lasting communal harmony can be brought about through moral and spiritual approach. This path may appear difficult in the present day materialistic world but given good intentions and with God's grace even impossible situations can be adequately met. The pity is that in spite of all our knowledge, experience and cleverness we persistently refuse to reform ourselves and listen to sane council.

Guru Nanak's life-period can be divided into three sub-periods on the basis of his activities. The first sub-period which was a period of three decades covered his childhood and early manhood; the second period which covered two decades was spent in travelling, and the last period whose span was two decades was that of relatively settled life at Kartarpur.

This last period is very important because the Guru gave expression to his own ideals in the context of normal family life. Besides, the Guru found time to concretise his plans and to evolve patterns to be followed by his followers. After a perusal of a different *Sakhis* and *vars* of Bhai Gurdas we come across the following features of the Guru's activities.

Foundation of the Sikh Church

Guru Nanak toured all over the world to communicate his programme of awakening the people to realise truth. So that his work should endure, he established a network of centres which he called *manjis* side by side with the centres of all other faiths. In this way, he founded, in a well-planned way, a community of his new faith, and this community of inspired disciples became the body of Sikh Church which he called *sangat*. There was a Sikh Church now all over India and outside India, in Ceylon, Tibet and Middle East. No founder of any religion had built such a vast organisation, breaking all provincial, national and cultural barriers during his own life time. Guru Nanak knew that unless it was centralized he could not expect his noble faith to survive.

To this purpose, he addressed himself vigorously. He made it clear to every one that his church was to be embedded in secular society. When Guru Nanak went on his missionary tours he put on the robes of religious orders of the holy places he was visiting. Holiness in these centres was inseparable from the holy garb. Now when 'Baba came to Kartarpur he laid aside the pilgrims' apparel, and put on ordinary worldly dress of the Punjabis of those days. He sat on a cot and strove hard to dispel the darkness of ignorance in the minds of the people.

Disciplined Devotion

The second feature which we come across was the Guru's added emphasis in the religious

and social discipline. The *Japji*, the *Rahtras*, the *Kirtan Sohila* were fixed as morning, evening and night prayers. In the day time, discussions were held, and the Master delivered sermons on the basis of questions put to him. *Kirtan* was held both in the early morning, following individual meditation, and also in the evening following the conclusion of the day's work. No one was expected to take the programme lightly. Guru himself observed the discipline very strictly.

Regular Instruction

The next feature of the Kartarpur pattern was the regular instructions imparted by the Guru. Such instructions could be given to individual followers as also to the regular gatherings of his disciples although the latter was more probable.

The content was, however, the same. "In both cases there would be the same emphasis upon the greatness of the God, upon His gracious self-revelation, upon the perils of human condition, and upon the paramount necessity of meditation on the Divine Name. Trust in conventional external forms would be exposed as essentially futile sometimes by means of gentle irony and at other times by direct denial of their efficacy. Those who placed their confidence in status conferred by caste or by wealth would be sternly admonished, and any one who depended on religious hypocrisy would be soundly condemned. His teachings had very deep effect on the people, many of whom embraced his religion. Bhai Budha, Lehna (later Guru Angad), Taru Popat, Prithi, Kheda, Ajita Randhava, Shdikh Mallo and Ubare Khan are some of the examples of conversions at first sight to the faith of the Guru.

Emphasis on Honest Labour

The fourth feature of the Kartarpur activities was regular daily labour. In the works of Guru Nanak asceticism is explicitly rejected and in its place a disciplined worldliness is set forth as the proper path for the believer. The Guru himself worked in his fields and did all odd jobs which a peasant had to do. His concept of a disciplined worldliness also enjoined a continuation of normal relationships and no wonder that his wife and sons lived with him at Kartarpur. After the fall of Sultanpur under the way of Babur, Bibi Nanki and Jai Ram are also said to have shifted to Kartarpur.

Common Free Kitchen

The next thing of the Kartarpur pattern of activities which strikes is the foundation of regular free kitchen. Every one worked for his living and gave a part of his earning for the free community kitchen. All the people, the Brahmins and the Parihia, the king and the pauper, the Muslims and the Hindus had to sit together and eat their meals to their satisfaction. Free kitchens were attached to the *Khanqahs* of various sufi orders but they were never regarded either as the internal part of the Church or the social institution to serve as an instrument to evolve a society, free from caste-prejudices and wealth prejudices etc.

Collection of Compositions

The next important aspect of the Kartarpur activities of the Guru was the committing of his sacred words to writing. These were the years when Guru Nanak was surrounded by disciples who received instruction from him and who presumably recorded what they had received. According to Dr. Trilochan Singh "the scribes wrote down the compositions of the Guru and many devotees copied the daily prayers and hymns. These collections were called *Bani Pothies* (books of hymns). Some scholars suggest that *Japji* was composed at Kartarpur. This contention is unfounded. The *Japji* was composed at different periods. The first verse, according to all records, was composed when he received the call at Sultanpur Lodi. There is a story in old Manuscripts of *Balas Janamsakhis* in which Guru Nanak is said to have edited it and rearranged the verses in the present final order. *Asa di var*, another composition was composed by Nanak at Pak Pattan at the request of Sheikh Ibrahim before he set out for his eastern and southern journeys. Similarly *O-In Kar* was composed on his return from the South. *Pothi* has been accepted as his maiden composition written during his early years. In this way, all the major compositions were completed before he settled down at Kartarpur. Out of the smaller compositions *Bara Maha*, seems to have been composed at Kartarpur. The *Bani Pathis* or the Book of his sacred hymns, compiled during his life time, became the spiritual regalia which passed on from him to Angad and from Angad to the third Guru. Out of the three

or four *Pothis* brought by Guru Arjan from Goindwal one was *Pothi* which Guru Nanak got compiled and edited under the supervision of Angad during the last few years of his life.

Punjab Tour

No doubt, the Guru led a settled life at Kartarpur but he stole some time to go out of the place to enlighten the Yogis of Achal Batala which was one of their important centres. The occasion was the Shivratri festival. Guru Nanak acquainted them with his own philosophy. The Yogis who were at first furious at the sight of Nanak calmed down and their leader Bhangar Nath expressed "You are Nanak, the greatest living enlightened of the dark age. In this iron age of ignorance and moral degradation you have shown to the people the path of sight and truth." Guru Nanak also met Bhai Lalo at Gujranwala where he had shifted from Eminabad after its sack by Babur. The Guru also went to Multan. Maqdoom Baha-ud-din accorded him hearty welcome. Jalal-ud-din of Uch also received him warmly. After meeting his friend Sheikh Ibrahim at Pak Pattan, Guru Nanak came back to Kartarpur. On September 22, 1539 A.D., Nanak passed away. According to *Puratan Janamsakhi* "Before Nanak's death, a quarrel arose between his Hindu and Mohammadan followers as to the disposal of his corpse. The former wished to burn, the latter to bury it. Nanak was asked to decide it. He said, 'Let the Hindus place flowers on my right and the Muslims on my left. They whose flowers are found fresh tomorrow morning may have the disposal of the body.' After the flowers had been set on each side of him, the prophet drew his sheet over the flowers as well as himself. Next morning the sheet was found unchanged. When the sheet was removed, both the sets of flowers were found equally fresh but the body had disappeared." The version is replete with unhistorical facts, but one thing which emerges is that he was loved alike by the Hindus and the Muslims, and this was really the great triumph of his example and teachings.

Teachings of Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak's teachings may be evaluated in the context of the contemporary socio-political and religious condition and his vision vis-a-vis the people. Politically, the Punjab was not well. Undoubtedly, it experienced peace during the Lodi rule, yet it could not escape the strain to which it was put on account of the political intrigues at Delhi. Its adminis-

trative apparatus had to be overhauled to meet the new challenges; but it was not possible for Daulat Khan to do so on account of his own uncertain future and the danger of the Mughals hovering on the periphery of the Punjab. Besides this, the corruption, the absence of the political will to uplift the masses and growth of feudalistic tendencies—all these things had made the political scene unpleasant—rather irritating. Socially, the people were lacking in dynamism, so essential for the progress of a nation. Still the society based on caste-system was the norm for the Hindus. Muslims too, had lost their initial robustness and the will to go ahead. They too had developed classes which believed in exclusiveness. Moral corruption, voluptuousness, hypocrisy had stalked both the Hindus and Muslims. Besides the religious groups, there were tribal, regional, local and social groups—each having air of superiority to the other and reposing faith in social exclusiveness. Religiously too, the contemporary society presented a

sombre picture: It was marked by so many religious sects—each affirming faith in its own indispensability and finality.

Shaivites, Vaishnavites, Siddhacharyas, Jogies were the cases in point. So far as the Jogies were concerned, they were quite strongly entrenched in the minds of the people and were a factor to be reckoned with. Neo-Brahmanism was also making headway. It was helped by the Hindu Zamindars who were able to acquire some political powers during the last days of the rule of the Sultans. All these sects had certain good principles; but certainly none put forward a programme suitable for the general uplift of the people.

Islam which, during the initial stages of the Muslim rule, the vitality which could initiate social processes for general good of the people, also failed to do the needful because firstly it became the religion of conquerors instead of remaining the religion of the people and secondly many empty rituals and ceremonies crept into it.

Guru Nanak observed all of the people as a whole.

this. Obviously his task was extremely difficult. Social groups having religious sanction die hard. Similarly religious faiths and ideas, regional and local affinities also required strong bettering. Caste barriers also were not easy to demolish. Punjab was the welter of semitic civilization and Aryan civilization opposed to each other. Guru Nanak was to prepare a programme in a way acceptable to all types of people.

He, notwithstanding the hurdles, framed his teachings which epitomised the Guru's vision and also the due consideration which he gave to different psychic, psychological, sociological and social facets of the people. His concept of God, his theories of Karma, Hukam, Shabd, Guru, his social and economic ideas, his emphasis on ethics-based political and social actions—all these things aimed at the liberation of men from parochialism of all kinds and lending him necessary dynamism to enable him to shed off his characteristic inertia and to work for the betterment

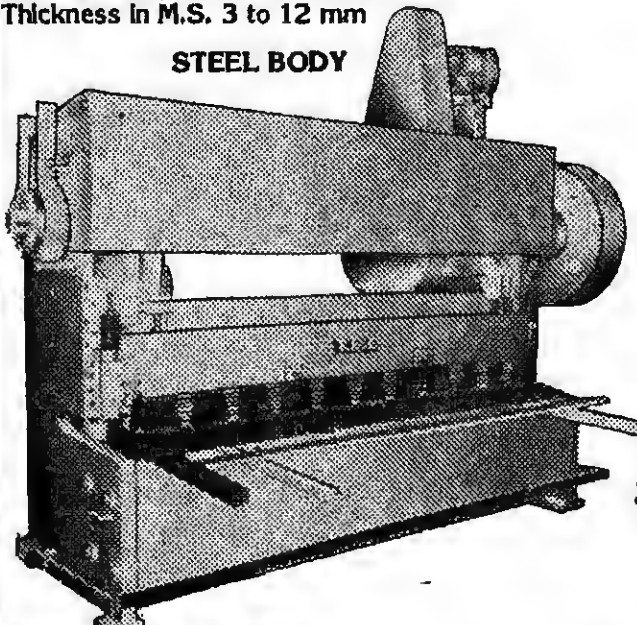
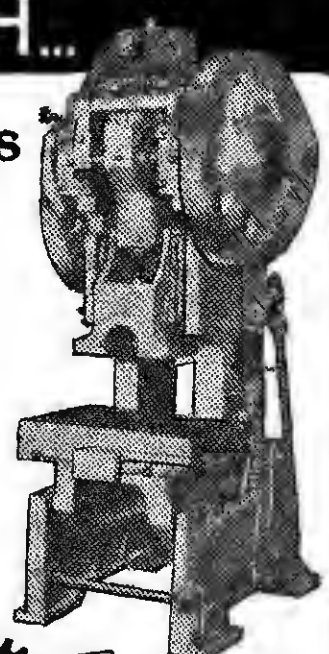
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The Prophet of Kal-yuga

By : Prof. Darbara Singh

Our ancient sages divided the extent of time, that the Earth has existed for, into four periods, *Satyuga*, *Doapar*, *Treta* and *Kalyuga*. These periods (*yugas*) have been marked with special qualities or characteristics, according to the ways of people there. *Satyuga* is characterised with truth, honesty, sincerity, sympathy and love. *Doapar* is characterised with disregard for truth, insincerity, hypocrisy, and enjoyment. *Treta* is characterised with dishonesty, cheating, arrogance, passion and indulgence. *Kalyuga* is known for falsehood, dishonesty, selfishness, sex, treachery and fraud. It was in *Kalyuga* that Guru Nanak came into this world.

When Guru Nanak was born, according to the evidence of the nurse attending his birth, the whole room was filled with brilliant light and all those present there were dazed. According to Bhai Gurdas, the famous Sikh chronicler, with the advent of the Guru the prevalent darkness disappeared and the world was illumined.

The childhood and boyhood period of Guru Nanak is marked with so many miracles just as Christ's life is full of miracles. But miracles though they give a halo of divinity to a great man are not of much importance as they are unnatural and beyond one's conception much of the real value of a great man lies in his work and deeds, which are within one's control and conception.

When Nanak had crossed the age of 25, he was taken in employment as a store-keeper of a wheat godown at Sultanpur Lodhi with the influence of his brother-in-law Jai Ram, the husband of his sister Bebe Nanki, who loved Nanak exceedingly. There Nanak lived with his sister. He would go to the rivulet Baiene every morning to take his bath. One morning he removed his clothes and gave these to his companion and went into the rivulet but did not come out. His companion waited for a long time but Nanak would not come out and, very much disappointed, went home and told the fact to Nanak's brother-in-law. Jai Ram was very much upset and he arranged with some divers to search out Nanak from the rivulet. But there was no trace of Nanak. After three days Nanak again appeared at the very place where he took his dip in the rivulet, quite hale and hearty. Persons who were present there put Nanak questions where he had gone. Nanak

then uttered, "There is no Hindu, no Musalman". But one God, the Lord. Then he explained, "Why are you fighting as Hindus or Musalmans while actually you are worshipping the same Lord". Guru Nanak says, "There is but One God, True is His name and Creative His Personality. He is without fear, without enmity, immortal in form, Unborn, and self-illumined. By Guru's, grace he is obtained." Nanak now became a spiritual leader. People now began to follow him and called him their Guru. Guru Nanak at this time was about thirty years and had two sons Siri Chand and Lakhmi Das.

Guru Nanak now began to live in solitude and contemplate how to carry out his message and teach people to worship the only Creator, leaving aside all other isms, forms, formalities and superstitions. He took with him a Musalman Mirasi Mardana and resolved to go abroad to teach his mission. Guru Nanak's life mission was to make the people worship only One God and forget not His qualities. He revealed God as truth, love, mercy, kindness, humility, help, service, honest labour,

non-lure for money and self-comfort. For him superstition, abhorrence, pride and birth vanity had no importance. He stood for the help of all mankind with mind, bodily service and monetary assistance. Guru Nanak's God is not a mere Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer. His God is not a female with so many hands, holding different things in different hands. His God is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent.

To carry out his mission Guru Nanak went to different places, without any money, stock of food and comfortable provisions, solely in the company of Mardana. He had to search out his way to different places without any guide and permit. The task was exceedingly difficult but his will was his sole guide. He had to suffer hunger, thirst and discomforts of various nature. He met different kinds of people, some rajas, nawabs and rich men, some philosophers, yogis and Sidhs, some tyrants, marauders, dacoits and thieves but the Guru was not dismayed in his travels as these were not meant for sight-seeing, investigations and explorations. These travels were undertaken solely to

"In the Kal-yuga, fear, misappropriation and Godlessness asserted itself to the fullest extent—the age of falsehood as Guru Nanak appropriately termed it."

carry out his mission and for the good of mankind and to make the earth a place worth living, without fear, ignorance and self-imposed miseries.

Guru Nanak's meetings with Babar, Malik Bhago, Bhai Lalo, Gorakh Nath, Kaoda Rakhsh, Duni Chand, Mula Khatri, Sheikh Brahm, who was a disciple of Sheikh Farid, and had discussions with them on various topics, some spiritual, and some worldly. These discussions are highly interesting and illuminating.

Babar who had come from Kabul with his hordes of dacoits and looters and had killed so many innocent men and women for the sake of gold and women Guru Nanak addressed, "Oh Babar having conquered Khurasan you have invaded Hindustan and frightened the people. If a powerful man tortures another powerful, there is no excuse then. But when a lion kills a lamb it is pitiable. Oh Lord, when so much of tyranny has taken place, Thou hast not felt any pain."

Talking to Malik Bhago the Guru said, "What is the good of performing a *yag* with money that is not well earned. The loaf prepared with hard earned money yields milk while the one prepared with illgotten money yields only blood."

To Gorakh Nath he said, "Oh Nath ji, yoga and renunciation and ashes and renunciation do not lead to *moksha*. It by living an honest hard life and by remembering God that you get *moksha*."

To Kaoda Rakhsh, Guru Nanak advised to give up this cruel way that is nothing but cruelty.

Duni Chand had arranged a *Shrad* on the death day of his father when Guru Nanak reached his place and advised him not to indulge in such meaningless practices in the name of forefathers but live an honest life. The riches that you have amassed with which you perform *Shrads* you cannot carry with you just as you cannot carry this needle of mine with you in the next world, after the death."

To spread the name of God, Guru Nanak travelled to different places, such as Krukshetra, Banaras, Haridwar, Ceylon, Tibet, Mecca, Madina, Baqu and Assam. At these places he preached to the people his message and established groups or *manjis* who were to carry on the mission of spreading the name of God, honest living, and sharing their hard earned gains with the poor and the needy, which Kalyuga needs badly.

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The expression, "Sarbat da Bhalla", denotes the wish for the good of all, for peace, tranquillity and harmony of the entire humanity. In this wish, we have to remain above the distinction of high or low, caste, creed or colour. We are not to give preference to this or that land. "Sarbat da Bhalla" is the desire and prayer for the good of the entire universe. This is why our daily prayers end with these words, as ours is the path where we have to put into practice :

*"Nan ko bairi nahen bigana,
sagal sang ham ko han ayi."*

The good of the universe, of the humanity lies in the high spirit of 'Naam', the intense devotion to the name of Lord, Almighty, Omnipotent and Omnipresent, the Creator of all, the Maker of the whole universe.

First practical example in this direction lies in the event when due to Babar's barbarous acts, Emmabad town was plundered and pillaged. A great disaster overtook the entire human population of the town; the rich and the poor all were massacred or wounded in their thousands. On seeing this ghastly scene, Guru Nanak said to God:

*"Eti maar pai kurlane, tain ki
darad nan aya?"*

The first great guide, the founder of Sikhism, messenger of peace, raised this voice against tyranny, meaning thereby:

O God, are you not pained even at this great tragedy, this ghastly sight, when humanity has been beaten severely so much that they are bleeding profusely and are sobing and sighing?

How beautifully this example denotes the desire for the good of the humanity?

Why the need arose to raise the voice of truthfulness and righteousness in those dark ages of suppression?

Because the path of Sikhism is that all are alike. Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man is the basis of Sikh philosophy, Sikh way of life. It is written in Gurbani :

*Ek pita ekas ke ham barak tun
mera gurhaee and
"Awal allah nur upayia kudrat
ke sab bande,
Ek nur te sab jag upjiya kaun
bhalai kaun mandai."*

The meanings of these hymns are obvious, that God created the light. All people are the creation of Heaven's light. The entire universe got birth from this light. Then who can be good and who can be bad?

Guru Nanak left his sweet hearth and home and travelled far and wide in various continents during the days when not an iota of travelling facilities was available. Quite frequently he had to live without food and water. All this indicates that the Guru had an ardent desire, a burning eagerness, to put

Sarbat Da Bhalla

'Sarbat da Bhalla' is the key-note of our twice-a-day prayer

By : Sardar Partap Singh

humanity on the right path. In this task he did not distinguish between the people of one country or the other. He did not take into consideration the question of caste, colour or creed. It has been said in Gurbani :

*"Khatiri, Brahmin, Shoodar,
Vaish—updesh chanh varan
kasa sanjha."*

On starting at the first round of journeys (Udasis), Bebe Nanki, sister of Guru Nanak, brought her nephews, Baba Sri Chand and Lakhmi Chand, before him and pleaded that at least for the sake of his children and his wife, Mata Choni, he should give up the decision of going away. At this Guruji said that he could not ignore thousands of other people who were roaming in wilderness.

Seeing the entire world smouldering with jealousy, superstitions, oppression and cruelty, Guruji addressed Almighty Lord:

*"Jagat jalan da rakh lai apni
kirpa dhar."*

As the entire creation is His, we all are well-knit together. By asking for welfare of the

universe, we are asking for the welfare of the Creator because :

*"Sabhnan man manak thahan
mul machangwa,
Je tau piriya di sik hiaa nan
thahe kahida,
Manak sab amalvain"*

Guru Nanak undertook four big journeys called udasis. Over a course of many years, he covered vast areas extending to north, east and west. Guruji taught the people to establish dharamsalas i.e. places of gathering for religious-cum-social welfare benefits. At many places these dharamsalas came into being. Benefits for a few, when consolidated, become the benefits and wellbeing of the entire universe. He devoted his entire life to inculcate among the people the zest to endeavour for the wellbeing of all, because its propagation is based upon the fact that the whole universe comes from one great Divine Light. In asking for Sarbat da Bhalla, we totally ignore the distinction of grade and caste, country or religion. There comes a desire for the well-being of the entire

humanity, and this well-being lies in the high order of 'Naam.'

In this context, Guru Nanak and the rest of the nine Gurus sought and established the well-being of the universe.

The entire holy volume of Guru Granth Sahib, when studied thoroughly, teaches us to ask for and beg from God the well-being of the whole kingdom of God. In the fulfilment of this desire, Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed their lives. The Tenth Guru sacrificed his entire family. Rest of the Gurus went on struggling for the attainment of the welfare of all the world. To achieve this aim, they had to pass through great ordeals through turmoils and tribulations, and through untold hardships.

Now there emerged in 1945 United Nations Organisation and a series of sub organisations subordinate to the U.N.O.

What for?

For the wellbeing of the universe, pattern is the same as laid down by the Great Gurus. Directly or indirectly they are accepting and owning the same principles which have been laid down by the Gurus.

Asking for the Sarbat da Bhalla is a unique prayer. In this prayer, selfishness is totally extinct; self-benefits have been kept at bay. Egoism has vanished. The entire creation of Almighty has been covered by this prayer. Asking for the welfare of the universe means good for all in pure sense. Not that a man wants to steal someones article or grab anyone's wealth or possession and he should be successful in his nefarious designs. No, not at all. Universal welfare means all that is good in the real sense. It should survive, should exist.

The concept, 'Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man', is the very foundation of this secular faith, Sikhism, which ultimately leads us to be the fervent propagator and enthusiastic believer in the desire for the welfare of the entire universe. Sarbat da Bhalla is the key-note of our twice-a-day prayer. It is because Sikh philosophy, Sikh history, and Sikh way of life revolve round this great golden principle.

Five centuries ago, the fountain of love and amity and the messenger of peace, the embodiment of truthfulness, infused among masses the spirit of love, fraternity, brotherhood and love for the entire humanity. They learnt the wish and desire to ask for the benefit and welfare of the whole creation of God.

Guru Nanak Dev taught us: Ask from God Sarbat da Bhalla, universal well-being, good of all humanity, peace and harmony, for the entire universe and for the whole creation.

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Guru Nanak Dev whose name shines among the galaxy of saints of world fame administered a healing touch to the suffering humanity by spreading his message of universal love, faith and equality through self-composed and spontaneous hymns with a natural flow of music. Born in 1469 at Talwandi now known as Nankana Sahib in West Pakistan, he travelled through all the four corners of India and beyond for twenty-four years assailing the old cherished errors and superstitions and guiding the people to tread on the right path. He died in 1539.

A large number of people from all castes and creeds became his disciples. Bhai Gurdas mentions the *dharmshalas* and free kitchens established at each and every place which the Guru visited where congregations were held to worship the Name. Sujan Rai Bhandari of Batala wrote in 1696, 'If a man comes at dead of night and utters the name of Baba Nanak, though he may be a stranger at all or even a thief or a wayfarer or a doubtful character, he is always welcomed as a brother and as such served forthwith. This fact is corroborated by Muhammad Iqbal after centuries who wrote.

*Phir uti akhir sada tauhid
ke Punjab se*

*Hind ko ek mard-e-kamil ne
jagaya khab se*

Guru Nanak belonged to the bhakti school of thought though his teachings varied in certain aspects. He emphasized repetition of the name and social reform. Some of the major tenets of his religion to be

belief in the unity of God and theory of *Karma*, equality of human beings and removal of untouchability, hatred of the caste system, *nam marga*, transmigration of soul, denunciation of false ceremonies, penances, fasts and pilgrimages, equality of status of women in the society, giving of charity, emphasis on inter-dining or community kitchen, establishment of congregations etc.

Guru Nanak noticed the wide gulf existing in the society of his times between the Hindus and the Muslims who had ignored the precepts of their faiths. His prominent utterance was 'There is no Hindu, there is no Musalman'. He made it clear that there was no difference between man and man. The natural corollary to monotheism in which Guru Nanak had faith is oneness of humanity. Guru Nanak remarked: 'The True God is one who unites all.' During his visit to Baghdad in 1520-21 he clarified that Allah, Ram and Rahim are

the same. Mosques, temples, the *Namaz* and Hindu worship all aim at God. Guru Nanak closely observed the religious way of thinking of other schools of thought wherever he went, and with a broad vision preached moral principles based on humanitarianism.

Guru Nanak stressed that honest living was more dignified than dishonest dealings. He preached the dignity of labour. He considered honesty and hard work as fundamental to the building of moral strength. During his visit to south-west Punjab, he showed his disapproval of Malik Bhago, a rich man at Syedpur in Gujranwala by declining the invitation to stay with one who had enriched himself by unfair means. The Guru preferred to grace the modest residence of a faithful and a sincere man of

thought and deeds, named Bhai the sweat of his Lalo, a carpenter who earned his livelihood by brow. Tradition still says that to Duni Chand, the multi-millionaire of Lahore, the Guru handed over a needle with the suggestion to give it back to him in the next world. On Duni Chand's regrets to carry the needle beyond this world, the Guru asked him surprisingly how could he then carry his accumulated wealth. In case he could not carry his millions, they would be of no use to him after death. Indeed, in Guru Nanak's heart there was flowing a flood of love for the poor and the weak and infinite compassion for the sinner.

At the time of Babar's invasion of India in 1521, Guru Nanak felt very sad for his own land and its inhabitants. He composed verses at this

The Preceptor Of True Religion

juncture called 'Babar Vani' which are frequently quoted. He lamented over the massacre by the victorious army of Babar, and remarked that Babar brought his army of sin from Kabul, demanding forced taxation from the people. Guru Nanak witnessed the heinous crimes committed by the merciless soldiers of the Mughal army. His tender soul was moved by the atrocities and said 'Babarwani phir gae koe na roti khae'. He also blamed the Pathan rulers of his times for leading a life of licentiousness and fetching untold miseries to the common folk. He remonstrated with the Lord for showing in-

India in their untold sufferings. Guru Nanak also challenged the popular beliefs of the people whom he noticed in sad predicament. He gave clear-cut and simple directions to tread on the path of righteousness. In fact the values of life enunciated by Guru Nanak to emancipate the medieval human beings have a universal relevance.

On the birthday of this great prophet one cannot pay a better tribute than these words of Guru Nanak himself:

Among the low, my caste is lowest

Among the lowly, I am the lowest,

Sayeth Nanak, I keep company of such men, and have no ambition to emulate great men,

Because where the lowly are looked after is the place blessed by the Supreme Master.

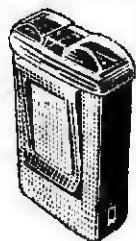
GURU NANAK

By : Dr. Gurbachan Singh Nayyar

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I recount here how my faith helped me to face a heart attack and how the heart attack reconfirmed my faith in the Will of God. I have neither the knowledge nor the capacity to present an academic discourse in depth on the subject. I only recount my personal experience in faith in a time of extreme stress. I recount how meditation may help medication in the treatment of illness.

I learn from experienced physicians and surgeons that without proper diagnosis of the ailment treatment is difficult, if not impossible. Treatment of serious illness must not depend upon 'trial and error' to avoid unhappy results. I also learn that eighty percent of diagnosis depends upon the accuracy with which the patient describes the symptoms and nineteen percent upon the expertise of the physician together with the skilful use of apparatus. There may still be an error of one percent.

The patient has to be sincere and faithful in his dealings with his physician. He must expose all his 'misdeeds'—in eating, drinking and other excesses or deficiencies, in his day to day life. His explanations may be likened to the faithful confession before a priest. The patient must have absolute faith in the ability of the physician to help cure the illness and to relieve the suffering.

Faith is not a commodity to purchase from the supermarket. Faith in anything or any person is developed by constant psychological exercise. This is easy for persons who are raised in an environment where faith in the supernatural forms part of day to day life. I am such a person, though not an extraordinary one. Most people of the Indian stock are similar in nature.

In the matter of treatment of serious illness too faith plays an important part. I believe eighty percent of the success in the treatment depends upon the patient's own psychological preparedness to resist illness, and nineteen percent depends upon the faithful response to medication. No medicine can help unless the patient faithfully believes that it will help.

I have been raised in a family that has absolute faith in the Will of God in all that happens or does not happen. With such a frame of mind, I put myself at the disposal of my physician when the time came.

The question is asked that, while I have so deep faith in the Will of God, why do I go to the physician for treatment?

Faith, Medication And Meditation

By : Sardar Meharvan Singh, Singapore

I am not an ardent 'faith healing' advocate. I go to the physician not to save me from death or even to prolong my life. I do so solely to cure illness and relieve suffering. For I believe that while we live we must enjoy good health. When it is the Will of God to end my life I accept it without question.

We accept death as a part of life and we have no inhibition about it. There have been three interesting incidents within my family which may explain the point. Such incidents are not peculiar to my family only; they are common in Indian communities :

(i) In 1943 my mother was lying ill with malaria and other complications aggravated by malnutrition of the period of war. At least once a week I dried out her bed and bedding. On the first occasion I noted under her pillow some unused white garments. I suggested that these be placed in a trunk. She firmly commanded me to replace them under the pillow. I questioned her no more, nor did I make enquiries from my father. In about three months I had self-realisation that she kept ready the garments for her

last journey. She lived four more years.

(ii) In 1948 I visited India. My maternal grandfather was then about 95 years of age. All his senses were still in good order. He performed his own last rites. He read the Guru Granth Sahib personally. A feast was held for him and surrounding villages. In place of his regular shirt he donned a 'kafoon'—shroud. He lived a quiet life in meditation for ten more years.

(iii) In 1966 again I visited India. My brothers arranged a feast, which involved cooking about 200 kilograms of rice. Fuel is always in short supply in the Punjab. For normal cooking they use dung-cake, cotton plant, degraived corn-cobs, dejuiced sugar-cane. The heat of such fuel is not intensive enough for large quantity cooking. Noticing a few logs lying in a corner I suggested chopping them. I was informed that these were reserved for a special purpose. I needed no further explanation. They were for cremation when required.

So we do not fear death. It is accepted as a fact of life. Only we do not know when it comes. When it does, it is

considered neither good nor bad.

In a moment of bitterness the parents of a dead child may wail out, "Why should our child die so early?" The question should be, "Why should anyone's child die early?" Faith in the Will of God consoles the mind and helps to avoid or overcome bitterness.

According to Indian philosophy each person is born with a predestined span of life. Life is likened to a train journey, passengers getting on or off at different stations. When the journey's end comes not all the physicians and surgeons can keep the passenger from getting off, though they do help the passenger to enjoy the journey free of pain and suffering. What point is there in extending the span of life (if at all it were possible), if only to be old but still futile? It would be more to the point to study ways and means of packing more living into the span of life already allotted to us.

Sins

Did I think of death when I was in the intensive care unit? The thought of death never occurred to me. In the seven weeks death was mentioned only once and then in a light mood—"the death certificate will show the cause of death—laughter".

Did I pray for the atonement of my sins? In Sikhism 'sin' is mentioned frequently as 'paap', 'augoon', 'gunah'. There are some oftquoted lines from certain verses like : "Forgive my past misdeeds, and put me on the correct path". "We commit many misdeeds, forgetful every moment; Lord, by Thy Grace, forgive us sinners, great miscreants".

I did pray every morning and evening using the set term "bhool chook maafkarni"—forgive any trespasses. But supplication for sins as thought of in Christianity never occurred to me. I believe that when I perform a good deed I am duly rewarded. Conversely when I commit a misdeed I am duly punished or will be punished sooner or later. The reward or punishment may not be easily perceived under normal worldly circumstances. It does come I believe, in this life, while others may think of the hereafter.

We do not expect our Guru to take over our sins. We should be fully accountable for our own trespasses. We do expect the Guru to give us guidance to get

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us back on the correct path whenever we go astray.

In a gathering of youths a grown-up girl gave her experience of serious illness. She prayed hard to God to let her recover from her illness, and she recovered fully. I doubt if it is correct to make specific demands upon God. That would make God a very busy being. If she had not recovered then there might have been bitterness. I also prayed, but in a different manner—"Let Thy Will be done". I have no special rights.

In serious illness keeping the mind occupied to avoid unhappy thoughts is all important. This becomes difficult when the patient is expected to have 'complete rest in bed'. All functions of the body are performed with the least movement in the bed.

Reading is the only function that may be performed without the need to move. But reading too may lead to excitement. For instance at present journalism thrives on sensational matter. Some particular news may upset the patient emotionally, with serious repercussions on the heart. The mind controls all the functions of the body. When we read a novel or a drama, we may develop excitement in our eagerness to know what is to happen in the next chapter or act, or even in the next paragraph to our favourite character. This too may be the cause of anxiety.

Meditation

In such circumstances meditation plays an important part. Meditation must not be confused with yoga. Meditation requires to specific postures. It can be performed while walking, sitting or lying. Yoga, which includes meditation, may prevent illness and maintain good health. Meditation, without physical yoga, may help in recovery from illness.

Meditation is simply thinking of the Creator and His Creation. The mind is helped to withdraw from the excitement of the worldly events. For this, one must develop the habit of reciting or reading scriptures. Once the habit is formed, one recites or reads without physical or even mental effort. One does not have to understand the meaning of the scriptures.

Understanding gradually develops. Scriptures have such an inbuilt capacity. When one has faith in such capacity, understanding comes automatically. However in times of stress understanding is not important. The need is to keep occupied in reading without getting emotionally involved. To that extent my daily recitation and reading

**"By repeating God's Name, I live,
By forgetting it, I die."**

—Guru Nanak

was helpful, though I am not a deeply religious person.

When I thought of the trials and tribulations of our Gurus and martyrs, I derived great comfort. The experiences of some great Sikhs gave me immense spiritual uplift. The discomforts generated by the heart attack were considered no problem at all. I was able to accept pain and pleasure on equal footing as advocated by our Gurus. One verse in particular helped me more than anything else, as it did Bhai Randhir Singh, a great Sikh in the second and third decades of this century, while he endured the sub-human conditions of a British Indian solitary confinement:

"I contemplate ever the Name of God within my heart,

All comrades and companions are thereby saved;

The Lord (the Guru) is with me ever and ever;

Contemplating Him I live in His presence.

Thy will is ever sweet to me, Lord,

Nanak seeks only the Word of God."

The way I behaved was not pre-meditated, nor did I have any training for the purpose. If I was able to help another patient or two through psychological resource I had no prior thoughts about it. All this came spontaneously through the Grace

of God. I claim no reward for it and I met none of those patients since leaving hospital.

I was not aware of the proverb "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine". However, I did behave merrily throughout my illness. By the Grace of God I was able to promote a merry atmosphere in the room where I stayed for six weeks after one week in the intensive care unit.

That I was able to produce a booklet upon my experience of the seven weeks in hospital was not pre-meditated. This happened spontaneously within the hospital. While trying to get my narrative up-to-date I developed some excitement, which upset the progress of my recovery. However by the Grace of God that too was overcome.

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Baba Harbans Singh's Eventful Life

By : Sardar Avtar Singh Sethi

About 44 years ago Sant Baba Gurmukh Singh was doing Kar Sewa of historical gurdwara, *Janam Asthan*, birth place of Guru Nanak, at Nankana Sahib near Lahore (now in Pakistan). He was watching with interest a young newly-wedded couple doing Kar Sewa with "tokri" on their heads—and also doing 'Nam Simran'.

After sometime when the couple was about to leave the Gurdwara, Sant Gurmukh Singh came near to them and, putting his hand on the shoulders of young boy, said: "young boy your services are more needed here for the Sikh Panth." The boy was Baba Harbans Singh.

These few words of Baba Gurmukh Singh touched him, and within minutes he decided to remain at Nankana Sahib. He sacrificed his home and hearth and all worldly comforts. Even his newly-wedded wife was moved too much that she left for her village.

Since then, the whole life of Baba Harbans Singh has been dedicated to the Sikh Panth with construction of more than two dozen historical Sikh shrines with all their grandeur and glory.



*Baba Harbans Singh....
A life full of dedication*

Baba Harbans Singh's life is quite simple and regulated. He wears simple 'Khadar' and a pair of chappals. He eats only two 'chappatis' twice daily that too on his heads, after doing some physical labour. When one Gursikh, after seeing tokri on his head, approached Babaji. Why should he do such manual

labour, he replied: "If I eat 'roti' I must deserve it by doing work—for two meals, I must earn."

Baba Harbans Singh belongs to a chain of dedicated sants like Baba Gurmukh Singh, who initiated 'Kar Sewa' in the modern times from Nankana Sahib, Baba Sadhu Singh, Baba Jhanda Singh, Baba Dalip Singh and Baba Jeewan Singh. Besides getting constructed various gurdwaras at Nankana Sahib through Kar Sewa, Baba Gurmukh Singh was instrumental, with the help of Baba Sadhu Singh in construction of beautiful 'Parkarma' of Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar.

Baba Harbans Singh was the 'Jathedar' of *Sachkhand Hazoor Sahib* Nanded, Maharashtra, when the construction of historical gurdwaras there took place. It was at Nanded that Guru Gobind Singh had spent last years of his life. With Baba Jeewan Singh and Baba Dalip



*Giani Zail Singh
doing Kar-Sewa at
Langar Asthan of
Gurdwara Sri
Bangla Sahib. With
him is Bhai Hem
Singh, Head Granthi
and Bekhshi
Joginder Singh*

Singh, Baba Harbans Singh completed the construction of *Gadwari River bridge* also.

In Haryana, at Pahowa, gurdwara *Baoli Sahib* and Sarovar, connected with Guru Nanak, were constructed by Baba Harbans Singh with sangats efforts. Besides, gurdwara at Karnal as well as Manji Sahib gurdwara and sarovar at *Ber Sahib*, were got constructed by him with the joint efforts at Baba Fauja Singh, Baba Karnail Singh and Baba Jagir Singh. Gurdwara *Lakhnaur Sahib Sarovar's* plan is in initial stages. It was here 10th Guru's maternal grand-

parents used to live. Still this gurdwara has two palangs (bedsteads) of the Guru.

At *Paonta Sahib*, Himachal Pradesh, Baba Harbans Singh has got constructed a beautiful hall with size of 190 feet x 160 feet besides *Peer Budhu Shah Asthan* nearby. This place is connected with Guru Gobind Singh.

At *Patna Sahib* birth place of Guru Gobind Singh gurdwaras at *Gai Ghat* and *Guru Ka Bagh* and sarovar, where Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib stayed, have been constructed through Kar Sewa by Babaji.

At Nanakmata in U.P. and where Guru Nanak had discussions with Sidhs, a gurdwara has been constructed. Gurdwara *Tanda Nenakpura* has been raised where Guru Nanak was sold for two horses. A sarovar and "asthan" in memory of Guru Hargobind have been built—at *Dud Dee Khui*, a historical Sikh place. Gurdwara *Ritha Sahib*, with residential rooms has been built from where we get *Mitha Ritha Parshad*, a place hallowed by Guru Nanak.

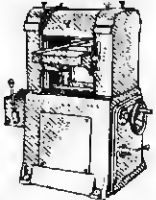
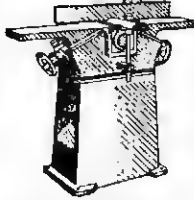

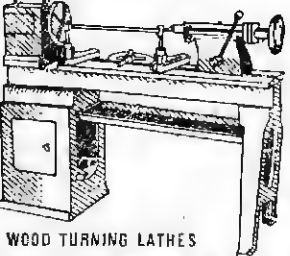
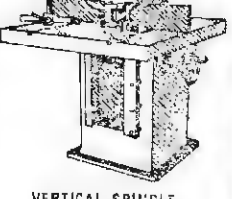
Gurdwara *Kauri Ghat* on Indo-Nepal border, where Guru Nanak was helped by a Kauri in crossing the river in his boat while going to Nepal, a gurdwara has been raised.

At Baramulla in Jammu & Kashmir, a historical place, connected with Guru Hargobind, Baba Harbans Singh has agreed to get constructed a beautiful gurdwara.

Historical gurdwaras built in Punjab recently includes one at Morinda, where youngest Sahibzadas of Guru Gobind Singh, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Baba Singh were arrested and kept at the local police station. At Fatehgarh Sahib, near Sirhind, where these two Sahibzadas were bricked alive, Baba Harbans Singh got constructed a big hall for diwans. It has been named *Diwan Todar Mall Hall* in dedication, to that brave diwan of

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the Mughals who gave gold coins for buying a small piece of land from the Nawab for cremating the bodies of these two youngest martyrs of Sikh history.

Also at *Fatehgarh Sahib*, Baba Harbans Singh got laid beautiful "parkarna" of white marbels.

At *Chamkaur Sahib* Garhi a beautiful gurdwara is being constructed. Here two elder Sahibzadas of Guru Gobind Singh, Baba Ajit Singh and Baba Jojar Singh, while bravely fighting the Mughals, embraced martyrdom. Baba Harbans Singh purchased nearby houses for the purpose.

At *Anandpur Sahib*, Diwan asthan construction is in initial stages. Gurdwara *Mukatsar Sahib* and Gurdwara *Dina Kanger*, where Guru Gobind Singh wrote *Zafarnama* to Emperor Aurangzeb have been constructed.

In Delhi, if any Sikh who has been abroad or has not visited Delhi for four or five years, he will be surprised, that, in such a short period, a number of historical gurdwaras have been newly constructed with marvellous architectural beauty.

Gurdwara *Bangla Sahib*, where Guru Harkishan stayed and cured thousands of sick with holy Amrit, has now a beautiful sarovar. Baba Harbans Singh has made a room near the sarovar headquarters. He also got constructed beautiful 1: gar building at Gurdwara *Sisganj* in Chandni Chowk.

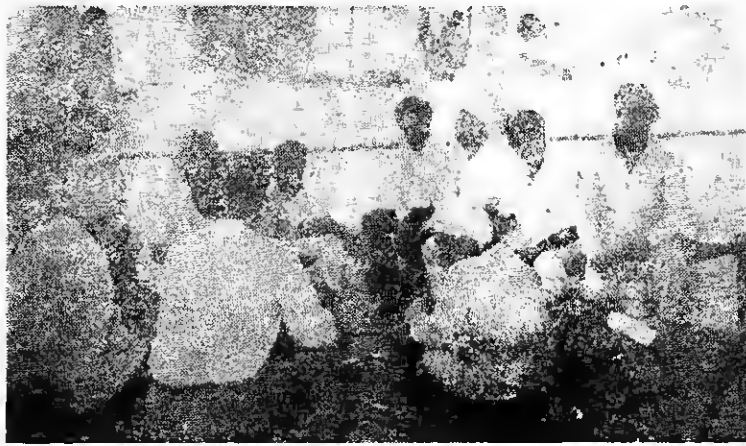
Gurdwara *Nanak Pta*, has a beautiful sarovar now. Gurdwara *Moti Bagh* from where Guru Gobind Singh sent by arrow a letter to Bahadurshah sitting at Red Fort, is now a beautiful massive fort-type building.

Gurdwara *Damdama Sahib*, near Nizamuddin, on Delhi-Agra railway line, where emperor Bahadur Shah bowed before Guru Gobind Singh, when his strong elephant was defeated by the Guru's bullock, has now a white marble building.

Gurdwara *Bala Sahib*, where last rites of Guru Harkishan were performed, is now a spacious building with iron-glass-work of the roofs.

Gurdwara *Rakab Ganj*, Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed himself for the cause of Hinduism. Lakh Shah Vanjara set his own house on fire, with body of the Guru inside it. In his memory, near the Gurdwara *Rakab Ganj*, a big hall for diwans has been constructed by Baba Harbans Singh. It is called *Lakh Shah Vanjara Hall*.

Baba Harbans Singh not only constructed these "Gurdhams" but also provided many with gold "Kalashes" and gold "Palkis" for Guru Granth Sahib. The sangat goes on giving donations in cash



Baba Harbans Singh sitting on a cot when Kar Sewa of Lakh Shah Vanjara Hall at Gurdwara Rakabganj was going on in 1982. With him are Sardar Avtar Singh Sethi, Bakshi Joginder Singh, Sardar Lakhbir Singh Chadha, Sardar Manmohan Singh Motiwala and his son. Sardar Partap Singh Sethi, Sardar Teja Singh, Sardar Jaswant Singh Kochar and Sardar Inderjit Singh Chabhra.

and kind. Crores of rupees have been used for these shrines and the work is still continuing.

In this momentous task, Babaji takes every precaution that not a single paisa is wasted, materials, he tries to purchase at controlled rates.

Bakshi Joginder Singh, his

close disciple, who came to his service on 11 June, 1976, is always busy in negotiating with different authorities for getting material needed exempted from excise and other duties. Only Babaji himself makes purchases and payments. He has not authorised anybody else, not the

least Bakshi Joginder Singh or Sardar Avtar Singh Sethi, for receiving any money on his behalf, though sometimes they make appeals to the sangat for contributions to this noble task. Baba Surinder Singh and Baba Bachan Singh, are duly authorised to receive money in the absence of Baba Harbans Singh.

Baba Harbans Singh is so energetic in this old age that he manages all such construction projects and move from one place to another in quick succession. He has vast knowledge of architectural and civil engineering techniques. All the projects, which he has undertaken, are of great historical, aesthetical and architectural beauty.

He got constructed all the above gurdwaras through Kar Sewa, where the rich and the poor put in free labour and offer 'Tan, Man, Dhan' (body, mind and money) for the Guru's house. These gurdwaras radiate spiritual message of universal brotherhood, to everyone, irrespective of his caste, creed or religion.

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A hymn of praise to God

Japji is considered as the epitome of the *Adi Granth* and the crux of Sikh Thought. It was composed by Guru Nanak in the later years of his life, when he settled down at Kartarpur after his long journeys. People from far and near used to gather around him and listen to his discourses. He composed this longer poem for their recitation, guidance and spiritual advancement. It was meant to be recited by the disciples in the early hours of the morning. Though Guru Nanak did not consider mere recitation as a sufficient dose for spiritual progress, he wanted his disciples to comprehend the basic tenets through regular study and practice.

Amrit Vani has recorded and released a set of 20 pre-recorded cassette tapes of Gurbani Vichar on *Japji* by a renowned Sikh theologian and philosopher



Giani Sant Singh Maskin. These tapes of 60 minutes duration each expound Guru Nanak's philosophy as contained in *Japji*. The whole set of 20 tapes will cost the listeners Rs. 400/- only. This is indeed a valuable set to be preserved by all Gurbani lovers.

In the first stanza the Guru describes God to be ineffable in terms of discursive thought. No mortification can be regarded to be an end in itself. In this stanza the Guru maintains that *Hukam rajai chalna Nanak likhiya nal* "voluntary submission to the Will of God" is the way to obtain union with Him. That Will is the sum of the universal laws of Nature or the eternal decrees of God.

In the second stanza the Guru affirms: "By His Will non-sentient world comes into being; By His Will is made all sentient life; By His Will from lower forms do higher forms of life arise"—"*Hukme andar Sabh Kau*."

In the third stanza the Guru warns mankind against the dangers of doctrinal-exclusiveness. In recalling to mind the great religions of the world the Guru proclaims: "God, by His Will hath laid out the Path of Life".

In the fourth stanza the Guru teaches: "Infinite love is the astrolable of His mysteries". Indeed, we can only love what we know and we never know completely what we do not love. Love is a mode of knowledge. In order to obtain a glimpse of His Court we must in the hours of dawn meditate on the Name. To love God is to keep His commandments.

In the fifth stanza the Guru explains that the World Spirit creates, sustains and ultimately resolves the universe. Indeed, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva represent three sides of God's activity in regard to the world and are not to be regarded as different persons.

In the sixth stanza the Guru teaches that the Path is one of effort and grace. In this stanza the Guru maintains that in life nothing can be had "without effort". If so, performance of traditional custom is no substitute for moral effort and intelligence.

In the seventh stanza the Guru talks of spiritual grace given to man from instant to instant to help him to achieve his final end.

In the eighth to the eleventh stanzas of the *Japji*, the Guru maintains that by hearing the Word of the Lord man realises the truth about the *Sidhs*, *Pirs*,

Surs, and *Naths*, the earth, the mythical Bull, the skies, the islands, continents and under-worlds. Again, by hearing the Word man understands all about Shiva, Brahma and Indra, the *Shastras*, *Smrities* and the *Vedas*.

In the twelfth to the fifteenth stanzas, the Guru describes the fruits of *Mannana*, logical reflection or the "examination of meaning". In the words of the Guru man devoted to the "examination of meaning" does not stumble in ignorance for he stands established in "the law of righteousness and piety".

In the sixteenth stanza the Guru explains that the popular belief that the earth was supported on the back of "Bull" was founded on a misconception of God's Power as manifested in His creation. In the sixth and seventh verses of this stanza the Guru affirms that the world itself is sustained by its structure and

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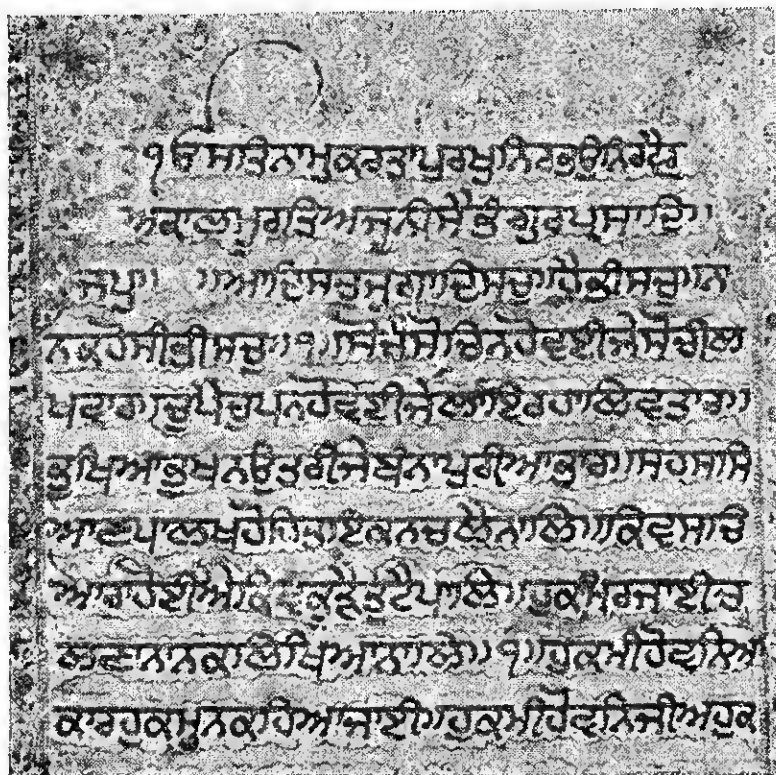
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The opening stanza of Japji Sahib

its laws. Again, no one can count or reckon the forms of life, sentient or non-sentient, that God has created.

In the seventeenth to the twentieth stanzas the Guru affirms that belief in the doctrine of vicarious atonement serves as an excuse for and even as an invitation to sin and that worship of the incarnation can hardly fail to be disastrous in the long run.

In the twenty-first stanza the Guru affirms that theories as regards the dawn of creation have no validity. God Himself is Matter, the Primal Word and Brahma. In the opening lines of the twenty-first stanza the Guru maintains that pilgrimages, austerities, special acts of mercy, alms-giving and religious gifts have little merit. In the words of the Guru, human body is the temple of God.

In the twenty-second stanza the Guru teaches that there is no essential difference in what the Vedas and the Semitic Books affirm about the worlds in regions beyond the skies and below.

In the twenty-third stanza the Guru maintains that it is not possible for man to form a just estimate about the works of God.

In the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth stanzas the Guru describes the benevolence of God who hath not a "particle of desire".

In the twenty-sixth stanza the Guru shows the greatness of God as revealed in the invaluable moral gifts bestowed on man.

In the twenty-seventh stanza the Guru brings before us a vision of God's greatness. In the words of Guru "God is true, He is the external Lord, the eternal Master of the eternal Name. He is Timeless now and ever shall be."

In the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth stanzas the Guru teaches 'universal brotherhood' and 'conquest of desire' to be the aims of life.

In the thirty-first stanza the Guru teaches that belief in the spatial attributes of God has no validity. In the words of the Guru, "God hath His seat in every region, in every region His store."

From what is said above it is plain that in the sixteenth to the thirty-first stanzas the Guru subjects to close cross-examination, the popular beliefs that obtained in his days. This is *Mannana* or logical reflection as known to the Upanishdic *Rishis*. In order to trace the development of character it was necessary to point out the necessity of right beliefs for man is made by his beliefs.

In the thirty second stanza the Guru affirms that utterance of the Name of God is the first step to enter into one self.

In the thirty-third stanza, the Guru affirms that man has no power to do anything without God's assistance. "Throw me not on myself" is the passionate appeal to God of the pilgrim.

In the thirty-fourth stanza, the Guru describes the 'law of righteousness and piety'. In this stanza, the Guru maintains that in the universe the law of causation governing actions and their effects in the physical and psychological planes admits of no exception. In an attempt to understand Nature man sees himself as a part of an irrefragable web of cause and effect and realises that he must be judged on the record of his deeds.

Again, in the universe, nights, seasons, dates, days, air, water

and fire perform their duties in a spirit of detachment. God's sun shines equally on the just and the unjust and God's winds blow equally on the good and the evil.

In the thirty-third and the thirty-fourth stanzas, the Guru exhorts man to work without regard to the fruits of work in a state of complete non-attachment to self.

In the thirty-fourth and the thirty fifth stanzas, the Guru explains the relationship between moral action and spiritual knowledge. Self-less behaviour makes an accession of knowledge and accession of knowledge makes possible the performance of further and more genuinely selfless actions which in their turn enhance the pilgrim's capacity for knowing. Plainly, the relationship between *Dharm-khand* and *Jnana-khand* is circular, as it were, reciprocal. In the thirty-fourth stanza the world is described to be the "abode of righteousness and piety". In the thirty-fifth stanza, the world is described to be "the field of action".

In the thirty-sixth stanza, the Guru affirms that without Humility the development of character in all its details is not complete. Indeed, the knowledge of God can come only to those who are prepared to die to self and so make room as it were for God.

In the thirty-seventh stanza, the Guru deals with the last stage on the journey of life where "heroes mighty most inebriated with God and inextricably bound up with His devotion" attain union with God helped by Divine Grace. In the *Japji* belief in God incarnate is prohibited.

In the concluding stanza the Guru affirms that the Path of Life outlined in the *Japji* is

reasonable, verifiable and practical. In this Path the pilgrim has to be an embodiment of Patience, Chastity, Understanding, Knowledge, Fear of God, Austerity and Universal love. In the Path of mystic life it is right conduct and abundant compassion rather than logic and metaphysical enquiry that really matter. As stated above, the Path of Life outlined in the *Japji* is one of effort and spiritual grace.

In the Epilogue, the Guru explains that those alone who meditate on the Name of God with all the heart attain the goal of life. In words incomparable in form the Guru teaches that man in relation to the universe is a universe on a small scale made of the five gross elements—ether, air, fire, water and earth....

In the concluding lines of the Epilogue the Guru proclaims:

Changyian bureiyan watche Dharam hadur,

"Adjudication on deeds, good or bad;

Some seated near Him, others thrown afar,

Those who meditate on the Name with all the heart,

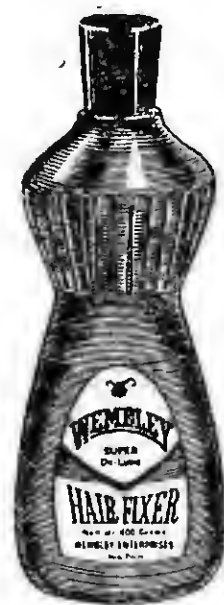
Attain the goal of life !

Nanak, their faces lit with Divine Light,

And with them many others freed and liberated !"

In the Path of mystic philosophy the pilgrim who meditates on the Name with all the heart attains the goal of life.

Many are called but since few choose to be chosen, few are chosen. In the *Japji* the Guru proclaims that those who are not chosen are given another chance to take the cosmic intelligence test.



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Indian media displayed anti-Sikh prejudices throughout Punjab crisis

By : Lt. Col. Jaswant Singh (Retd.)

Lt.-Gen. Harbakhsh Singh, the hero and GOC-in-C Western Command in the 1965 war against Pakistan, who refused all suggestions by General Choudhary to withdraw to the line of River Beas, who rejuvenated the defeated and demoralised Indian army after the 1962 debacle against the Chinese, has, in his letter of October 16 in a New Delhi daily paper torn to shreds the ill-informed and patently false allegations against this distinguished soldier. Lt.-Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora's letter of October 24 should make some of the enemies of India's unity, integrity and secularism hold their heads in shame as their utterances are anti-national and seditious. The media has insistently displayed their anti-Sikh prejudice throughout the Punjab crisis as even stated by Sardar Khushwant Singh in his book "Tragedy of Punjab". In the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, there were desertions on a large scale, abandoning of tanks and artillery guns in the face of the enemy for which death sentence is the prescribed punishment. For example, one such unit, which abandoned their tanks in the Sialkot sector, was recommended for disbandment from brigade commander upwards. In all these cases a lenient view was taken and drastic remedies under the Army Act were avoided.

The five distinguished Army commanders with their ages in bracket, namely Lt.-Gen. M.S. Wadalia (76), Chief of the General Staff and Deputy Army Chief under Lt.-Generals Thimmayya, Thapar and Chandhary; Lt.-Gen. Harbakhsh Singh (71), Lt.-Gen. J.S. Dhillon (70) destroyed Pakistani Patton tanks advancing on Amritsar with antiquated Churchill tanks frustrating the enemy's grand slam; Lt.-Gen. J.S. Aurora (68), the victor in Bangladesh, and Lt.-Gen. Sartaj Singh (68), the hero of Chhamb-Jaurian in 1971, have rendered yeoman service by advising the powers that be in the national interest not to treat Sikh soldiers as ordinary deserters but as those who acted on the spur of the moment under great emotional stress caused by the shocking news about the Golden Temple. This can be gauged by the fact that no Sikh officer led them thereby exposing false charges of conspiracy at the behest of Sant Bhindranwale or foreign powers. It is painful to read communal motives being attributed to their sound advice and even the President and Sardar Amarinder Singh of Patiala have been drag-

ged into it. Being battle-tested warriors, they do not want fractionalisation of the army or creation of an East Bengal-type situation in Punjab which led to the formation of Bangladesh. There cannot be two standards for two sets of soldiers; more so when the circumstances are far more mitigating as opposed to desertion in the face of the enemy. I recall with pride when the whole of India supported people like Jawaharlal Nehru and Tej Bahadur Sapru, who personally defended Indian National Army officers, namely Shah Nawaz Khan, Sehgal and Dhillon under court martial by the alien British for joining

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. A wise government should avoid a similar polarisation in Punjab in case such trials are held and harsh punishments awarded.

The commanders at all levels failed as leaders to ensure that no conflict arose between observation of military duty and religious faith and susceptibilities of an individual soldier. Undue secrecy as opposed to taking their men into confidence, press censorship by the government and innocent killings, false encounter deaths, reports of harassment of families by security forces of all hues were the major contributory causes. It is time that the government took serious note of Mr. Romesh Thapar's advice in "Probe India" which reads:

"The Sikh community in fact is being treated like a defeated enemy. Even independent report

from Punjab bears this out. The repercussions of this revanchist Congress posturing could have a disastrous effect on our republic, and even upon the armed forces of this country. We are allowing ourselves to make a vote bank of a kind of ugly Hindu euphoria".

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Bhai Mardana Memorial Students' Kirtan Darbar

A Students Kirtan Darbar was held recently at Gurdwara Singh Sabha Model Town Ludhiana under the auspices of Guru Gobind Singh Study Circle, a religious and cultural organisation of students and youth. Students from different colleges all over Punjab performed Kirtan with great devotion and love towards Gurbani in a well attended congregation at a large well arranged and decorated pandal.

Principal Surjit Singh Bhatia, Deputy D.P.J. Colleges (Retd) Dr. Darshan Singh Bains, and Dr. Devinder Kaur Deep from P.A.U. were the judges. Principal Surjit Singh said

that Gurbani Kirtan is the only mean to bring about harmony and peace. Dr. Darshan Singh Bains said that musical instruments play a vital role to take the message of Gurbani down upto the core of our hearts.

Addressing on the occasion, Sardar Partap Singh, Chief Organisation of the Study Circle said that more such students Kirtan darbar will be organised throughout the state. Sardar Gurmit Singh, Deputy Chief Organiser and Sardar Manjit Singh, Asstt. Editor of monthly 'Sada Virsa-Sada Gourav' appealed to the Sangat to help the organisation in bringing a moral and religious

revolution among the students and youth. Sardar Gurmit Singh, Kirtan Secretary, Sardar Charan Kanwal Singh, Kirtan Secretary Students Wing and Bibi Mukhwinder Kaur all head kirtani jathas of the Study Circle also performed kirtan.

The Sikh Book Centre organised on the occasion a Salecum-Exhibition of the Books. According to the judgement, Bhai Mardana Running Trophy goes to Guru Nanak Girls College, Ludhiana, Padam Shri Mohan Singh Running Trophy goes to Guru Nanak Khalsa College for Women, Ludhiana, Akal Degree College, Mastuana (Sangrur) won the 3rd, 4th and 5th prizes go to Master Tara Singh Memorial College, Ludhiana and Guru Nanak National

College, Doraha respectively.

Miss Punam of Guru Nanak Girls College won the Gold Medal for individual performance, silver medal goes to Bibi Harwinder Kaur Bedi of Guru Nanak Khalsa College for Women, bronze medal won by Bibi Kuldip Kaur of Master Tara Singh Memorial College. Four special consolation prizes to Daljit Singh of Mohindra College, Patiala, Amarjit Singh, Mohindra College, Patiala, Shamshad Ali, Guru Nanak National College, Doraha and Malkit Singh, Government College for Men, Chandigarh for individual performances.

Sardar Avtar Singh Grewal, President District Bar Association and Gurdwara Singh Sabha gave away the prizes

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On his research work titled "Sifting the myth from history of Guru Nanak's relationship with Lodhis and the Mughals"

Sardar Gurmit Singh, Advocate

**Awarded degree of Doctrate Philosophy
by Punjab University**

Guru Nanak had prior knowledge of Babar's impending invasion of India and he had prophesised it in his hymns contained in the *Adi Granth* but there is no substance in the assertions made by Mohsin Fani in *Dabistan-e-Mazahib* and Rattan Singh Bhangu in *Prachin Panth Parkash* that Guru Nanak being dissatisfied with the Lodhi Sultans had called the Mughals in to India.

These conclusions have been

because Guru's preachings against the prevalent corruption in Lodhi administration were considered to be a threat to the security of the state.

This study also shows that Guru Nanak was considered to be a Muslim Pir because of his appearance, dress and teachings and on that account Babar had sought Guru Nanak's blessings for his dynasty to rule over India.

The research is likely to give a new turn to study of history as it projects Guru Nanak as a political figure directly involved in the political affairs of India.



arrived at by Sardar Gurmit Singh, Advocate, Sirsa (Haryana), in his research work titled 'Sifting The Myth From History of Guru Nanak's Relationship with the Lodhis and the Mughals' for which he has been recently awarded degree of Doctorate of Philosophy by Punjab University, Chandigarh.

The research scholar opines that Guru Nanak's patriotic verses included in *Adi Granth* in which he laments at the sufferings of innocent Indians at the hands of Babar's invading soldiers rules out the possibility of Guru Nanak being a party to any such invitation to invasion. However, Daulat Khan Lodhi, governor of Lahore, who through his son had invited Babar for invasion as mentioned by Babar in his memoirs, was definitely a disciple or admirer of Guru Nanak. At the time of divine enlightenment, Guru Nanak was serving as store-keeper with this Daulat Khan Lodhi at Sultanpur Lodhi. The research reveals that Guru Nanak had warned Daulat Khan Lodhi that in case he invites Babar for invasion he (Daulat Khan) too will lose his royal status and will suffer at the hands of invaders. The study further reveals that Guru Nanak was imprisoned by the then ruler Ibrahim Lodhi at Delhi

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NOTICE

We regret that due to disturbed conditions in Delhi and imposition of curfew and closure of our office and printing press from 31st October to 5th November, we could not bring out and post our Guru Nanak Number on 2nd November as scheduled earlier. Now this issue (Guru Nanak Number) is being posted to our readers on November 10. Readers may please note that this is a combined issue of 29th October,

5th November and 12th November 1984.

We may also add here that most of the material-text as well as advertisements—was printed before the genocide of Sikhs unleashed on 31st October which continued till 4th November, 1984.

The immediate future is still uncertain. Circumstances permitting, we hope to bring out our issue of 19th November on schedule.

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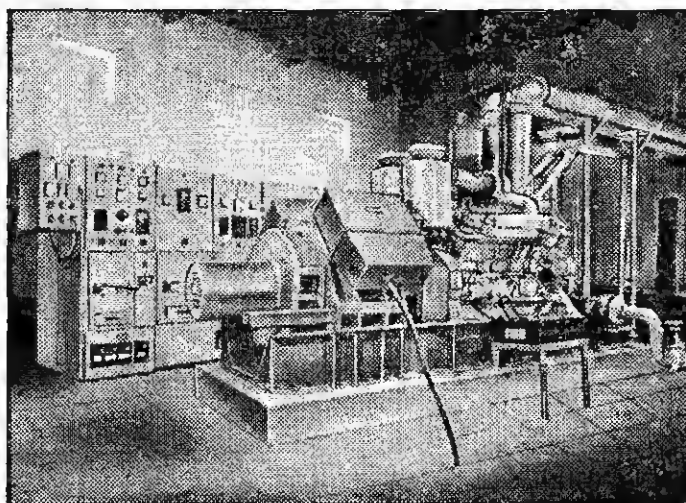
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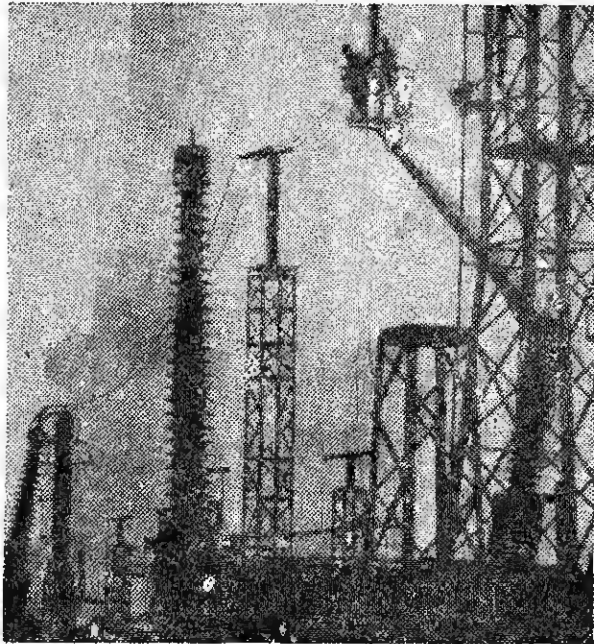


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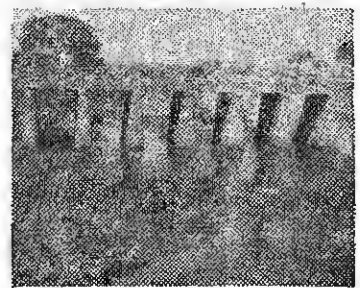
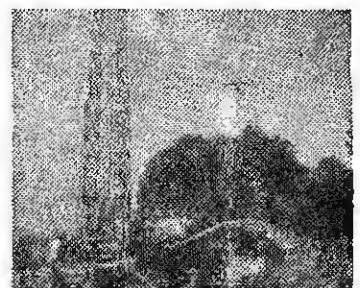
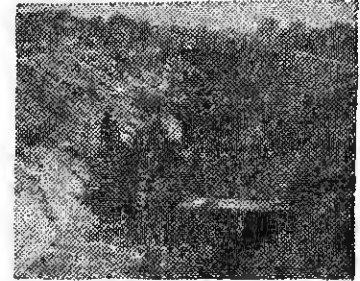
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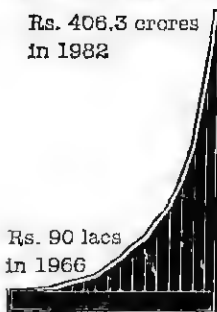


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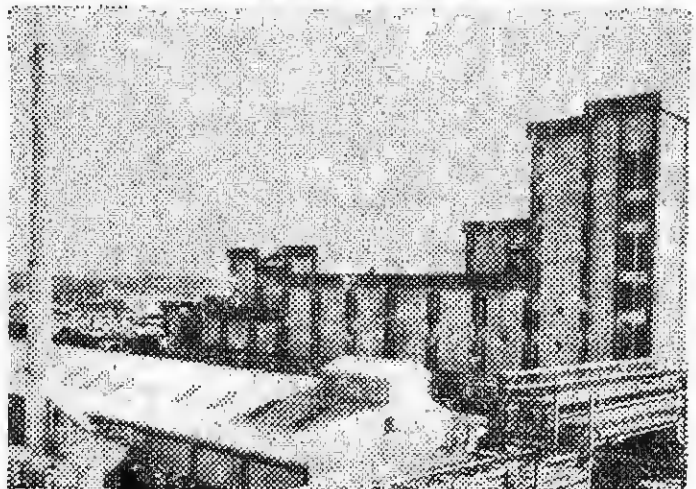


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